

THE LONDON READER

of Literature, Science, Art, and General Information.

[ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.]

No. 953.—VOL. XXXVII.]

FOR THE WEEK ENDING AUGUST 6, 1881.

[PRICE ONE PENNY.]



[THE FORSAKEN BRIDE.]

TRUE TILL DEATH; OR, A FAILURE OF JUSTICE.

CHAPTER VII.

Get place and wealth if possible with grace,
If not, by any means get wealth and place.

THE rain beat sharply against the window of the carriage as the whistle sounded and the train moved out of the little station.

Eleanor shivered and wrapped her cloak more closely around her, and her movement aroused Dennis, who for the first time seemed to notice how cold and wet she was, and taking a rug he wrapt it around her with a few words of apology and then sat down again opposite to her and relapsed into silence.

Two ladies, middle-aged and plain, and a stout, white-haired old gentleman occupied the carriage with them. The latter glanced sharply and curiously at the drenched couple as they entered, and then continued the perusal of his newspaper, whilst the two ladies, after staring hard at Eleanor's dripping garments and dishevelled hair, began a conversation together in that suppressed tone which inevitably conveys to a new-comer that he or she is its subject, and this went on for an hour or so, when the ladies, after a mighty collecting together of various articles, cloaks, shawls, and umbrellas, and miscellaneous parcels, alighted at their destination.

followed by the white-haired gentleman, who had snoozed quietly over his paper for the last twenty miles of the journey, and Dennis and Eleanor were left to themselves.

The girl felt anxious and weary and cold. She had left home without taking bite or sup, and leant back in her seat with closed eyes, feeling sick and faint, and her heart began to sink within her. She could not but see that Dennis neither thought nor cared for her comfort; that his thoughts were far away; that he was, in fact, scarcely conscious of her presence.

What sort of a life would they lead together? What if in time he grew to hate her? And as she remembered the dark, fierce, passionate look she had seen on his face many a time of late she almost trembled, and at the moment would have given all that she was possessed of to find herself once more in her grandmother's cottage.

Dennis's eyes fell on her face, and its worn, troubled look startled him, and his conscience smote him when he remembered that scarcely a dozen words had passed between them since they had met; his behaviour must indeed appear unkind and unloverlike to her. And perhaps the poor girl did love him; if so she must be suffering keenly from his neglect, and striving to shake off his dark thoughts Dennis bent over towards Eleanor and took her hand.

She started and opened her eyes; they were full of tears.

"You are tired, Eleanor," said Dennis, "and I have been thinking so deeply that I have not looked after you. Are you cold now?"

"Not very," she replied, in a low, sad voice. "How much longer shall we be getting to town?"

"Let me see—it's half-past eleven now;

another three-quarters of an hour and we shall be there. We have had a bad day for our expedition, Eleanor," he answered.

"Yes," she replied, indifferently, "but it's no matter. When do you mean to return to Stoneyvale, Dennis?"

"What! Don't you want to see the sights of London first, Eleanor?" he asked.

"Oh, yes, if you choose; but I suppose you'll be wanting to get back to Stoneyvale," she said.

"Stoneyvale be hanged!" he retorted, angrily, and Eleanor almost snrank from him, his face grew so stern and fierce.

Stoneyvale! He could not bear the idea of returning to it and of seeing again all the preparations he had made for Hilda's reception there—the idea maddened him.

"I'm in no hurry to get back, Eleanor," he said, more quietly. "I'm sick of the country. We must enjoy ourselves a bit in town, my dear, before we go back."

"Yes; just as you like, Dennis; what pleases you will please me," she answered, quietly.

"You are a good girl, Eleanor, and I—well, I've been upset lately, and by nature I'm not good-tempered; you must forgive me if I am a bit cross sometimes," he replied, apologetically.

A sharp pang of jealous anger shot through Eleanor's heart. She read Dennis's feelings aright—he was thinking of Hilda.

"Yes," she replied; "you have been tried, I know, Dennis. A man who has been cheated and deceived as you have been must feel it, dear. There will be a sensation in Hartford to-morrow, I fancy, won't there, Dennis?"

Dennis drew back and his face clouded. "My poor grandmother," she continued, "she

will miss me, Dennis. For her sake I should care to be long away, you know; however, when—as soon as we are married I will write to her and tell her I am safe."

Dennis nodded, and for awhile there was silence between them, and then the train stopped, the tickets were collected, and they speedily found themselves on the platform and at their journey's end.

The hotel to which Dennis took his intended bride was an old-fashioned establishment near the Strand, dull and gloomy, but intensely respectable, and Eleanor almost shuddered as she entered the sitting-room to which they were conducted. London was very unlike what she had pictured it to herself. She could hardly believe the dark, dirty street in which she found herself was really in the London she had so often heard of, and heard described with such enthusiasm.

It seemed to her dingy and smoky beyond description, and her spirits sank still lower when she found herself alone in the grim, solitary bedroom she was to occupy that night. Could she ever bring herself to sleep in the enormous four-post bed, with the faded damask hangings around it, and to remain all night alone in the large, desolate chamber?

Well, it must be done, but it was with a depression she could hardly account for, and for which she almost despised herself; that she returned to the sitting-room, where lunch was being prepared for them.

"I am a fool!" she said to herself. "In a few days I shall be back at Stoneyvale and Dennis will be my husband. He doesn't love me, of course, yet in time I dare say he will, and if not it does not much matter—but he will. I never met the man whom I could not make love me but once," and her face darkened. "What makes me so dull and stupid to-day, I wonder? I am tired, I suppose, and hungry. I wish Dennis would come; where has he gone to, I wonder?"

And for ten minutes or so she stood at the window watching the crowds that passed, spite of the rain and mud, and trying to still the vague regrets that would make themselves felt in her heart, till the opening of the door announced to her that Dennis had re-entered.

"Sorry to have made you wait, Eleanor," he said. "Come, sit down, dinner is ready. You must be famished, it's hours since breakfast."

"Breakfast!" said Eleanor, with a smile and a laugh. "Why, Dennis, I never had any."

"What! you have been all day fasting?" he cried. "Poor child!"

And for the first time that day he laid his lips lightly on her cheek, and then poured her out a glass of wine.

"Why, you must be faint with hunger," he continued. "Why didn't you tell me this before, Eleanor?"

"I was thinking of other things—of you, dear," she answered, looking up into his face with her lustrous black eyes.

But he did not kiss her again, only patted her kindly on the shoulder, sighed, and sat himself down to begin the repast.

"What shall we do now, Dennis?" said she, when the dinner was over. "See, the rain has stopped."

"Do? Why, I must prepare everything for to-morrow. See about the licence, you know, and all that, for we must be married without loss of time," he replied.

"I am ready," she replied, in a low tone.

And as she spoke Dame Halsworthy's words came back to Dennis vividly, as vividly as if he heard them spoken again:

"I know one who would name the day."

And the whole scene rose before him—the glowing ocean, the sun sinking into it in a glory of purple and gold; he seemed to hear the cries of the boatmen and the merry voices of the children, and to smell the roses and carnations in the little cottage garden.

He turned away abruptly, almost angrily, from Eleanor, and seizing his hat left the room. She looked after him in surprise.

"What is wrong now, I wonder? What did I say to offend him? I hope he'll give up these

moody ways after to-morrow, for I mean to enjoy myself in London and buy a number of things before I go back. It will never do to have a cross bear to go about with, though it will be as fun at all. How long will he be, I wonder? What shall I do to amuse myself?"

And she looked round the room. No book, not a newspaper even. And at last, weary of watching the crowd from the windows, she lay herself down on the sofa, and, tired out by the journey and early morning walk she had taken, fell asleep and dreamed that Hilda and Gerald Ray had followed her and were standing in the window watching till Dennis should return to expose her manoeuvres. Then she woke with a start and, behold! Dennis was standing beside her, and she looked eagerly into his face.

"It's all right—all settled, Eleanor," he said. "At eleven o'clock to-morrow at St. Mark's. You will be ready?"

"Of course," she replied, "if you wish it."

"If I wish it? Don't you wish it, Eleanor?" And for a moment a wild hope that she might refuse and tell him she had changed her mind and would return to Hartford shot through his brain and as quickly died away.

"Yes, Dennis. What do you mean? Of course I wish it," she replied.

And then she burst into tears, and burying her face in her hands wept aloud.

Dennis looked at her half pityingly, half wearily; it was too late to go back now—too late; but he began dimly to discern what a life of misery might be before both of them.

He strove to comfort the weeping girl as best he could, but his heart was too full of wretchedness to enable him to play his part well; he sat himself down beside her on the sofa, drew her towards him, and consoled to the best of his ability, and soon the smiles came back to her lips and her spirits returned, and for the rest of the evening she talked, laughed, and rattled away, scarcely pausing to let Dennis answer her, but keeping up a constant flow of amusing chatter till the clock struck ten, and then, taking up her candle, she retired to her grim bedroom.

It looked a little less desolate now, for the chambermaid had lit a blazing fire and drawn the curtains and wheeled a big armchair up to the fireplace. "It was such a raw, cold night, miss," she said, "that I thought you'd like a fire, for all it be April. Have you had a long journey to-day, miss?"

"Yes, I've come a good way, and we started early. I'm tired to death," replied Eleanor, letting down the magnificent tresses of her black hair till they fell around her almost to her knees, the chambermaid looking on admiringly.

"Do you stay with us for long, miss?" she asked.

"No; we go away to-morrow, I think," replied Eleanor.

"Well, good night then, miss, and I hope you'll sleep well," said the girl, and left the room. And Eleanor, throwing herself into the armchair, cowered over the fire till the clock striking twelve roused her, and she crept into bed, looking nervously round before she put out the light, as if she feared the ghost of some former occupant of the great, gloomy bed might be looking at her with jealous eyes and come with noiseless footsteps to her side to chill her blood with horror and chase sleep utterly from her eyelids.

Dennis lit a cigar when Eleanor left the sitting-room and wandered out into the streets; the rain had cleared off, and the moon rode serenely through an almost cloudless sky. He thought how the same moon was now shining down on the terrace at Ray Farm, glittering on Hilda's window and making a silver track across the ocean.

How often had they not watched it together, and the ships as they sailed out of the darkness across the path of moonlight and into the shadow again. Perhaps even then, at that very moment, she was looking at the moon, and perhaps with Gerald Ray at her side, and that thought made him groan and grind his teeth and stride away faster than ever down the

crowded street, as if avoiding the pursuit of some invisible enemy.

Why had she acted so cruelly? he wondered. What had he done to deserve such treatment at her hands? Had he not always been true to her? Had he even thought of another woman since he had known her? Why had she deceived him and been so false to him? Could it be true? Could she be bad, deceitful, double-faced, like the rest? Yes, for had he not seen her with her cousin, and heard the words that passed between them with his own ears?

And he groaned aloud in his misery as he thought of it, and then the vague feeling of regret that had filled his heart for his fight with Eleanor faded from it. A sort of sullen, revengeful joy entered into his soul and took up its abode within him, and he began to think with a savage glee of what she would say and feel when the news of his marriage reached her.

He would go home and write her a letter himself to be posted on the morrow after it was over, to tell her what he had done, how he had discovered her perfidy, and how he despised and hated her for it.

"Poor little Eleanor," he thought, as he passed her room, going to his own apartment, "she loves me I fancy; and all day long I have behaved to her like a brute—let her be cold and hungry and lonely. What a fool I am. Well, she shall not have to complain of my neglect again, poor thing, I don't love her. No! I can never love any woman again; but I'll be good to her; she shall never find out I don't love her. Love! pshaw! Can women love, I wonder? Are they worth the trouble one takes about them? Am there any who are really good and honest and trustworthy?"

And he seated himself at the table, took out his writing-book and began his letter to Hilda.

Many a page he wrote and tore up before he finished one so his liking, but at last the task was accomplished, and the letter—the last he should ever pen to the girl he had loved so passionately, and whom in spite of all in his heart he still loved still and ever would love, and between whom and himself he was about to raise an impassable barrier for ever.

And Hilda, what was she doing at that same hour? Kneeling beside the little white bed in the pretty bedroom she had occupied since her earliest days in the old farm, the moonlight shining in through the half-open shutters at her white form, praying with all her heart for the man she loved, and whom she believed would in a few days be her husband, and for whom she would have cheerfully laid down her life at any moment if need were, all unconscious of the future and the deadly blow that was being prepared for her.

Could Dennis have seen and heard her then—could he have read for one moment the feelings of her pure, loving heart, what a veil would have been lifted from his eyes! But that could not be, and blindly he rushed on, urged forward by the violence of his passions to wreck himself on the rocks that have been fatal to so many a life's happiness—the rocks of jealousy and revenge.

At half-past ten o'clock the next morning Dennis and Eleanor set out on foot for the old church of St. Mark's, where their marriage was to take place, a dingy old edifice on the other side of Temple Bar, with a cold, dreary, deserted, cheerless look about it, dust above, dust below, dust on all sides. A strange, grimy place for a wedding surely.

Eleanor shivered as she set her foot within the church and looked around. The sun could scarcely struggle through the windows, so thickly were they begrimed with dirt. The walls of the altar looked rickety and worm-eaten, and the carpeting within the rails unbrushed, the altar itself, in a rusty, crimson altar cloth, undusted and uncared for. Their steps echoed gloomily along the bare stones of the aisle, and the little fat cherubs and bearded effigies on the mural monuments seemed to look at them in calm surprise, as if wondering what two young people could find to induce them to be

married

dark, ch

As the

rails, wi

of faded

thin, sev

front of

crave pe

what? I

different

Hartford

oak seats

The clo

an hour

followed

in a mo

surprise,

building

raising o

slammed

and sank

footstool

And the

known w

by the bu

ing, and

wife, to

them part

be her hu

death sho

divine pr

together a

and all w

walked ar

register, a

and out in

"Well,

Dennis, w

to the ho

move to t

forgot to

I don't c

like the y

dull abou

the very m

"Yes,

answered

replied, "

And she

But somet

married in such a cheerless edifice on such a dark, chill day.

As they placed themselves before the altar rails, with the beadle in an old-fashioned livery of faded red and blue, and the pew-opener, a thin, severe-looking woman with a squint, and a front of false curls beneath her rusty, black crape bonnet, behind them to act as witnesses, what a strange, bare old place it looked. So different to the pretty, ivy-covered church at Hartford on the breezy hill-top, with its polished oak seats and flower-bedecked altar.

The clergyman arrived in haste a quarter of an hour behind his time, rushed into the vestry, followed by the clerk, from which he emerged in a moment or two, still struggling into his surplice, and strode up the aisle, making the building resound with his hurried footsteps and raising quite a little cloud of dust as he slammed the gate of the altar rails behind him and sank heavily on his knees on the dingy, red footstool beside the Communion table.

And then the service began, and the well-known words spoken in a loud, sonorous voice by the bustling divine rang through the building, and Dennis took Eleanor Merton to be his wife, to love and to cherish till death should them part, and Eleanor Merton took Dennis to be her husband, to love, cherish and obey till death should them part. And then the bustling divine pronounced them to be man and wife together and shut up the book with a loud bang and all was over, and Mr. and Mrs. Vanstone walked arm in arm into the vestry, signed the register, and then walked down the aisle again and out into the street.

"Well, that's over at last, Eleanor," said Dennis, with a huge sigh. "Now let's return to the hotel and get our traps together and move to the rooms I took for us yesterday—I forgot to tell you about them—near the park; I don't care for this part of London. You'll like the park better; it's horribly gloomy and dull about here. As for that old church it chilled the very marrow in my bones."

"Yes, it was a dismal old place, but it answered our purpose as well as another," she replied, "did not it, dear?"

And she looked up into his face with a smile. But something in her words jarred on him, and for the life of him, though he had sworn to put such thoughts once and for all from his mind, there came back to his remembrance, the plans for their wedding that he and Hilda had so often talked over—how the schoolchildren were to strew flowers before them as they came down the aisle of Hartford Church, how the tenants were to have a dinner, and how they were to drive home in the evening in the pony carriage he had bought for her, and for a moment a thrill of despair shot through him. All was over now; it could never be—he was married to another.

"What are you thinking of, Dennis?" said Eleanor, looking up at him as he paced thoughtfully along. "You are quite in a brown study, I do declare. Well, I'm sure that old church was enough to give anyone the blues. But cheer up and forget it. I want you to tell me all about London, you forget I am a poor little country mouse and know nothing about the town."

Dennis roused himself at the sound of her voice and began pointing out all the objects of interest on their way from the hotel to their new lodgings.

"How lovely, how beautiful!" cried Eleanor, as they drove along. "Oh! Dennis, how glad I am we came to this part of London. I confess I was terribly disappointed last night when we arrived and everything looked so grimy and dull, but this is beautiful."

Dennis smiled and tried to appear interested in her delight, but her lively prattle failed to amuse him, and time after time she had to repeat her remarks ere he heard them, for his thoughts still kept wandering far away, back to Hartford and Ray Farm.

"Look, look, Dennis!" she cried, as a party of ladies on horseback galloped past. "That is what I should like; you must teach me to ride when we get home, dear, and I will go scouring the country with you."

"If you like, Eleanor. Would you like to walk about the park a bit?" he asked.

But Eleanor was silent, and looked at her weather-stained garments with a half-comical air.

"Ah! what a fool I am," he cried. "Of course you can't make your first appearance in these old things. Come, let's go in then and after dinner we'll go and get you fitted out, and this evening we'll go to a theatre if you like."

"To a theatre! That will be delightful, Dennis. How good you are," she answered, with a beaming face.

So the afternoon was spent in shopping, and the evening in a hot theatre, where Dennis sat moodily beside his bride, taking little or no heed of what was passing around him, and paying but little attention to his wife's questions and remarks—his heart heavy as lead, and his thoughts for ever going back to the poor girl whom he had left behind him, and whom he felt in secret he had deeply wronged, for at any rate he had owed it to her to give her the chance of explaining her conduct and, if possible, vindicating it.

CHAPTER VIII.

The pity of it, Lago.

"Well, Dennis cannot be coming this evening, I suppose. What can have kept him?" thought Hilda, as an hour or two after Gerald's departure she wrapped herself in a thick cloak and ran down to the orchard gate and looked down the road to see if Dennis was anywhere in sight. "Somebody must have detained him, or something very important, for he has never let a whole day pass without coming over since father died. Oh! I hope nothing has happened—no accident. I hope he is not ill. I'll send over to-morrow morning if he's not here by breakfast-time. How I miss him. What would my life be worth without him, I wonder?"

And casting one last glance down the moonlit road she returned slowly to the house and went to bed sad and disappointed.

"I did so want him to see Gerald," she mused, "and now there is no chance of their meeting for the next six or eight months, if even then. Well, I will tell him all about it when he comes. I know after a while he will feel about Maggie as I do."

And then at peace with all the world and herself Hilda sank into a dreamless, quiet sleep. For the last time, poor child! How little did she imagine as she closed her eyes with a peaceful sigh that she would open them on a changed world, or suspected the terrible blow that was in store for her.

Next morning as she woke and heard the rain pattering against the window her first thoughts were for Dennis.

"He will have a wet ride across," she thought. "Dear me! I hope Thursday week will be a fine day. I should like everything to go off well."

And walking on tip-toe across the room she opened an old-fashioned press in which hung a snowy robe and a wreath of orange blossoms and soft flowing veil.

"I hope Dennis will like my dress," she murmured, taking the wreath from where it lay and touching the soft white flowers with gentle fingers. "It's pretty, I think, and Margery says it's lovely. I hope it is really nice. Yes, I think Dennis will be pleased with it. I must show it to him to-day."

And then she dressed and came downstairs and seated herself at the window to watch for Dennis—for Dennis, who was whirling along in the train towards London, fierce rage and blind despair in his heart, and with Eleanor Merton beside him. Margery brought in breakfast, but Hilda sent it down to be kept hot.

"Mr. Vanstone will certainly be here in a few minutes, Margery," she said; "I can wait."

"But you'll be hungry, dearest; it's close on ten o'clock now; take a cup of tea and a bit of something—a hot cake or some 'ut, child," urged the old woman.

So Hilda made shift to swallow a piece of cake and a cup of tea, and then resumed her seat by the window, listening anxiously for the sounds of horse's hoofs, but all in vain.

"Shall I bring up breakfast now, Miss Hilda?" asked Margery. "It's past eleven o'clock, dear."

"No, I'll wait a bit longer, Margery," she replied, sadly. "I can't bear to sit down alone somehow—it's so dull. Tell Harry if he's not too busy to go over to Stoneyvale and ask if Mr. Dennis came back last night. I feel anxious, Margery; he was over at Garford yesterday. I hope no accident has happened to him!"

"No, no, miss; ill news flies fast. No news is good news. If any harm had happened to Mr. Dennis we should have heard of it. Mr. Mason and Sam Outworth were in Garford and saw Mr. Dennis there—all strong and hearty," answered the housekeeper, consolingly.

"Yes, Margery, I daresay; but I am anxious for all that, so send Harry over, please," replied poor Hilda, and the old man presently trudged off to Stoneyvale.

The morning passed slowly over and the dinner hour came, and feeling sad and anxious Hilda sat down with what appetite she could to her dinner. Not a word, not a line had reached her from Dennis, and she was beginning to feel hurt.

"He might have written and sent me the note by one of the men," she thought, "but perhaps he is too busy. Ah! here is Harry at last. Well, Harry, where is Mr. Vanstone?"

"Mr. Vanstone, miss? He drove off this morning early, so Mrs. Green says, to Garford, and isn't back yet," answered the gardener.

"To Garford again?" exclaimed Hilda. "How strange! What can he want at Garford again to-day?"

"Please, miss," cried a small, shrill voice, and a girl of ten or twelve years put in her head at the door, "I saw Mr. Vanstone this morning driving through Garford Wood along of Miss Merton, please, miss!"

"With Miss Merton?" cried Hilda, in surprise. "How strange! What could Eleanor Merton be wanting at Garford? Well, I suppose Mr. Vanstone will be here this evening. Thank you, Harry; go into the kitchen and Mrs. Margery will give you some beer," and Hilda turned away, puzzled and disappointed.

What could he be doing with Eleanor Merton at Garford? she wondered; but Dennis was so kind and obliging to everyone, and perhaps Eleanor had asked him to give her a lift; and so she dismissed the matter from her mind and went about her usual avocations cheerfully, trying to make up for the time she had lost in the morning in her fruitless waiting for Dennis.

But the day wore on and Dennis did not arrive, and she grew anxious and pensive again, and a feeling of foreboding entered her mind. What could have kept him so long from her? She would go at once herself to Stoneyvale and see what was the matter, and hastily attiring herself she set forth on her errand.

She walked along in feverish haste, the keen wind blowing against her throbbing temples and flushed cheeks, and her heart beating painfully.

After an hour's brisk walk she arrived at the gate of the avenue, half hoping at every turn to see Dennis's tall figure coming towards her, but she was disappointed, and almost timidly she ascended the steps and knocked at the door of Stoneyvale.

It was opened by Mrs. Green, who started at the sight of her.

"Miss Hilda! is it you?" she cried, in surprise. "No bad news of the master, please God?"

"It is for news of the master I came to see you, Mrs. Green," replied Hilda, breathlessly. "I have not seen him since the day before yesterday. Where is he gone to? When will he be home? Have you heard from him?"

"Have I heard from him, miss?" returned the woman, half puzzled, half frightened. "He left me yesterday morning to drive over to Garford and said he would call at Ray on his road. He sent back the trap from Garford with orders

not to wait for him as he might be away all night; but I thought for sure, miss, you would know all about it, and when Mr. Harry came over this afternoon I told him he'd most likely find Mr. Vanstone at Ray when he got back again."

"No, no, Mrs. Green, he's never been at Ray!" cried Hilda, in a troubled voice and bewildered by the woman's tale. "How very strange it is; he left no message for me; I have had no letter! Oh, Mrs. Green! what can have happened to him?" and her voice began to tremble and her blue eyes were full of terror.

"Dear, dear—it be strange!" cried Mrs. Green; "but don't ye take on, Miss Hilda, perhaps he was late and couldn't stop on his way to Garford. We may get a letter to-morrow, or perhaps he may be home this very night, so don't cry, miss. Come in and rest a bit—sure it's almost your own house now, so ye needn't hesitate."

But Hilda felt strangely averse to enter.

The dim light of the candle that Mrs. Green had set down on the table feebly illuminated the old hall, lighting up the stands of guns and hunting-whips and various trophies of the chase that hung on the walls, and glimmering on the grim, old family portraits that were placed side by side on the panelled wainscoting.

There lay Dennis's rifle and shooting coat just as he had last left them; there also a newspaper and a number of plans for the erection of a new stable he had been looking over the day he met Eleanor Merton on the way to the farm.

Hilda glanced at all these things, and a shudder passed over her.

"No, I think not, Mrs. Green, thank you. It's so late that I mustn't come in; I must make haste back again. It was foolish of me to come out; perhaps I may find Mr. Vanstone at the farm when I get there, or meet him on the way. No, don't mind coming with me; I'm not a bit afraid to go alone;" and refusing all Mrs. Green's offers of company on the road she turned sadly from the door and retraced her steps to her own home.

It is strange how a familiar object seen at a certain time is often imprinted on the brain so that for ever afterwards it presents itself to the mind under the same aspect. So it was with Stoneyvale to Hilda; in after years it always rose before her remembrance as it presented itself to her saddened gaze that evening—the moonlight glittering on the windows and silvering the old stone gables, the deep shadows of the chestnut trees lying on the green sward, the sundial standing solemnly in the midst—like a nameless gravestone, Hilda thought, with a shudder, as the dull, heavy sound of the closing door fell on her ear and she began her homeward walk.

The farm was quiet enough as she passed up the garden and across the terrace. Only Margery was about when she came in, and the old woman answered her inquiries for Dennis in a sad voice.

"No, my lamb, he hasn't been here; go to bed, my deary; you'll have a letter by the post to-morrow, or maybe he'll be here himself by then. Don't worrit your pretty self, dear, about him; it will all be right to-morrow, you'll see. Men, the best of them, deary, are thoughtless folk; you'll have to get accustomed to their ways;" and the old woman strove to cheer her young mistress and to speak lightly of Dennis's absence; but for all that she felt anxious and mistrusted Eleanor Merton's appearance on the scene, for with a woman's penetration she saw how false she was, and disliked and suspected the girl, and augured ill of her frequent presence at the farm and Stoneyvale.

"A sly thing! What does the young master and Miss Hilda want with her, I should like to know—specially at this time? Sure, they've plenty else to think of—why should she come poking herself in where she's not wanted, the saucy thing?" and Margery would shake her head distrustfully and look at the girl askance.

With an anxious face she looked out from the back door for the postman next morning, and her heart beat quickly as the old man trudged

in and began fumbling in his leathern bag for the farm letters.

"Here be one for Sally," said he; "the newspaper and two for the missus. Good morning to ye, ma'am. The wedding will be next week, I suppose?"

"Ay, ay, Mister Yates; everything's ready. Now I must run to mistress with this letter from Mr. Vanstone. Good morning to ye, Mister Yates."

And Margery went quickly up to Hilda's room and knocked at her door. She was just awake.

"Come in, Margery," she said. "Who were you talking to? Has Dennis—has Mr. Vanstone come?"

"No, my deary, but the next best thing to it—here's a letter for you, darling;" and the old woman laid Dennis's epistle on the bed.

"Thanks, Margery. Give it to me, I'll read it in a minute," she answered.

And Margery, leaving her to the perusal of her letter, went out and shut the door behind her.

Hilda took the letter into her trembling hands.

"London!" she said, in surprise, as the postmark caught her eye. "What can he be doing in London? But how stupid I am not to read it, then I shall see," and she tore it open.

A ghastly change passed over her face as she read, every particle of colour left her cheeks, and her eyes were filled with an expression of deadly horror.

She read the letter again.

"What does it mean?" she muttered. "What does it mean? I cannot understand it. Am I going mad? What does Dennis mean?"

The letter ran thus:

"I was by the orchard gate on Tuesday night and saw you and your lover. I have found you out in time and know how vile and false you are. Do not think that I shall break my heart over your treachery, you are too worthless a thing to waste regrets on; there are others fairer and better than you in the world. When this reaches you I shall be a married man, and Eleanor Merton will be my wife. I shall have put an impassable barrier between us. I will do nothing further to punish you, but I will never forgive you nor see you again."

"Married!—he has married!—Eleanor Merton—he will never forgive me—never see me again! My God! what have I done?—what did I do? My lover—he saw me with my lover! Good Heavens! I see it all now—Gerald, it was Gerald he saw, and—and he has left me—he is married!" and with a bitter cry she fell back senseless on her pillow.

An hour passed. Margery had laid the breakfast carefully in the parlour and put fresh flowers in the vases and arranged the room tidily as she knew Hilda loved to see it.

"Why does she not come down, I wonder?" thought she. "Ah! she is reading the letter, dear child, and that has kept her, bless her heart; how pleased she was to get it. I suppose Master Dennis will be back this evening, and by this day week they'll be married."

And she stood looking out of the window till she perceived Harry, the gardener, coming up the orchard path at a quick pace and with a look of horror and amazement on his face.

"Mrs. Margery," he cried—"Mrs. Margery, hast thee seen the young mistress this morning?"

"Surely, Harry," replied Margery, going out to meet him. "What's wrong? She'll be down in a minute; she's got a letter from the young master this morning, that's kept her."

"Was she all right, dame, when you saw her? They're telling a curious story in the village," replied Harry, anxiously.

"Story! they be for ever telling stories in Hartford. They've tongues long enough to reach from here to Ameriky, Harry Gould," answered Margery, scornfully.

"Ay, but they say as how the old lady, Mrs. Merton, has had a letter from her granddaughter, Miss Eleanor, to say that she be married to Master Dennis in London," said he, breathlessly.

"Now, Harry Gould, I'm surprised at you to

listen to such talk, and he going to marry Miss Hilda come Thursday," replied the old dame, indignantly.

"Yes—but—Miss Eleanor Merton be gone since Wednesday, and she was seen at the station with Mr. Vanstone, Mrs. Margery," insisted Harry, looking perplexed and pushing his hat back on his head.

Mrs. Margery fell back as if struck by an unseen hand.

"God forgive us all, she's a bad one, is Eleanor Merton. Can she have made mischief between the young master and Miss Hilda to meet her own ends? He's a hasty temper, is Master Dennis. I'll go—I'll go to Miss Hilda this very moment. Harry, you wait here and I'll tell ye the rights of this."

And she turned away to Hilda's room. She knocked at the door, but there was no reply, only she heard a strange murmuring sound, as if someone were speaking in a low, hurried voice.

"Miss Hilda," she cried.

There was no answer, and struck by a sudden terror she opened the door.

What a sight met her gaze.

There, seated in the middle of the room was Hilda, her cheeks flushed and her eyes blazing with fever, her bridal wreath on her head, the long white veil enveloping her from head to foot, and Dennis's letter in her hand.

"Help me, Margery," she cried, wildly. "I shall be late. My wedding-day has come. It is time. Dress me."

And then fixing her eyes on the letter she gave a cry.

"Too late—I am too late, Margery! Ah! why did you not come sooner? He is married—married!"

And she sank in a heap on the floor, moaning pitiably.

Margery's cries soon brought assistance, and the poor, stricken girl was laid in her bed and the doctor sent for.

Dennis Vanstone's cruel letter explained the cause of her state, and in an hour or two Hilda's life was in danger; she lay on the bed raving in an acute paroxysm of brain fever.

(To be Continued.)

FRAGRANT CAMELLIAS.—The Vienna "Vaterland" reports that the gardener attached to the Palazzo Ferentino, at Naples, has, after the labour of years, succeeded in raising camellias having a distinct and fragrant perfume. The perfume is described as resembling somewhat a mixture of jonquil and pythosphorm, and as being very delicate. The flowers themselves are of a tender pale rose tint, and it is only in flowers of this colour that the agreeable fragrance has been hitherto obtained, although the gardener has endeavoured to impregnate white camellias with it.

ASBESTOS IN THE BLACK HILLS.—Among the new discoveries made within the past few months is a large body of asbestos. This was discovered by Mr. T. B. Leavenworth, about six miles from Deadwood City. The croppings can be traced for nearly 300 feet, while a large body of it has already been unearthed. Tests have been made which prove that this body of asbestos is equal to any yet discovered in America. It may be that this mineral will not come into immediate use, adds the "Pioneer," but the day is not far distant when it will become an article of export from the Hills.

AUTOMATIC BALLOTING MACHINE.—A new ballot box has just been submitted to the French Government. It has two locks, each opening with a different key, and an apparatus which clips a stub or corner from the ticket deposited by the elector, and drops the stub into one part of the box, the ticket going into the other division. Simultaneously the machine registers on a tablet before the voter the number of tickets clipped. The ballots must agree in number with the stubs, and both with the "tell-tale," and the voter sees for himself that his ballot has been cast and taken account of.



[THE REFUSAL.]

HER BITTER FOE; OR, A STRUGGLE FOR A HEART.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"Lost Through Gold," "Strong Temptation,"

&c., &c.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE CONSEQUENCE OF MAGDALEN'S SELF-SACRIFICE.

Oh, what a tangled web we weave
When first we practise to deceive.

It was the morning after Rosalie Norton's visit to Devreux Court. Sir Claude and his housekeeper sat at breakfast in the pleasant dining-room, whose windows were thrown wide open to admit the summer sunshine.

Mrs. Grey looked very charming in her quiet black dress. Her attire was still as scrupulously plain as when she first came to the Court, but the worn, anxious look had gone from her face. A keen observer would have described her as a woman who had suffered much, but would have added that just now a calm seemed to have come in the storm of her life. She seemed like a vessel which after weathering heavy gales had reached a pleasant harbour and was resting there perhaps to be repaired for the perils of other journeys; perhaps—who knew?—because her work was nearly over.

Sir Claude sat lost in thought. Joliffe, who was of course in attendance, fancied something serious must be the matter. His master's abstraction was not like his selfish lethargy of other days. Sir Claude had not gone back to the shabby shooting jacket. He was attired

irreproachably in a plain morning suit and black necktie. He had brought no treatise out of the library. The butler, who was a far-seeing individual, came to the conclusion that something of consequence had happened.

"Some more coffee, Sir Claude?" asked Mrs. Grey, in her clear, rich voice; but she had to repeat her question before she was answered.

"A little."

He stirred it absently; then as one who suddenly nerves himself for an effort:

"Joliffe, when does the first express from London come down?"

Joliffe respectfully represented that the express did not stop anywhere near the Court. If people came from London they had to take the other train; if there was a carriage to meet them why they might get on by two, if not it'd be three or later.

"Are you expecting visitors?" asked Mrs. Grey.

"I have been told that a gentleman may call on business. Bother him."

The last expression was an aside.

"Shall the carriage meet the train, sir?" asked Joliffe, obligingly.

But the baronet shook his head.

"At any rate I am safe from intrusion until two," he said, in an injured tone. "I wish you would come to me in the library when you have finished your breakfast."

This last was addressed to his housekeeper. She had finished then, but she lingered to give some directions to Joliffe about the stranger's reception—if he should come—and how after his interview with Sir Claude refreshments should be served in the dining-room.

"People will think Devreux Court a very inhospitable place if all our visitors run away like that young lady did yesterday."

"To be sure, ma'am," endorsed Joliffe, approvingly. "But you might have knocked me down with a feather when I heard she was gone. The master must have let her out himself through the library window."

Mrs. Grey thought the same herself, but she

was too wise a woman to say so, and thinking her employer would be expecting her she went to join him.

Sir Claude placed her a chair with ceremonious politeness, and Mrs. Grey began to feel the subject he wished to speak of was far more important than she had expected.

"I hope there is nothing wrong," she began, nervously, her white hand toying with her watch-chain.

"There is a great deal wrong," said Sir Claude, with a troubled face. "I am going to tell you all about it, but first there is a little matter of business I have neglected too long."

He went on with rare delicacy to suggest to her that she had now been more than three months at Devreux Court and nothing had been said or done in the matter of salary.

"I never thought of it," replied Mrs. Grey.

Sir Claude smiled in spite of himself.

"You are not fit to look after your own interests. Fortunately you have an honest person to deal with. I have thought of this matter often, but it seemed a difficult subject to mention to you. However, if such a sum as this every quarter will meet your views I need not tell you I shall consider myself your debtor."

He handed her a cheque for fifty pounds.

Mrs. Grey opened her eyes.

"I never thought of so much," she said, simply. "Indeed, Sir Claude, you are far too generous."

The baronet laughed.

"I am far from generous. If you knew the state of discomfort from which you rescued the Court you would know a little of all I owe you."

Mrs. Grey still held the cheque towards him, as though asking him to take it back.

"I should not spend so much in a year."

"Save it up then. Make presents with it. Buy yourself anything you fancy."

She shook her head.

"I have never had fancies since I have been able to indulge them. I often think, Sir Claude,

my happiest days were when I had to try and make each penny do the work of two."

"One cannot fancy you grinding and scraping," said the baronet, looking at her closely. "But have you none of the relations left who lived with you then?"

She shook her head.

"I have only one relation in the world, and he wants for nothing."

"Well, you must take the cheque and think about how you will spend it."

A long pause. Mrs. Grey was thinking she might retire when Sir Claude laid one hand suddenly upon her shoulder.

"I am afraid there is a stop coming to our quiet life," he said, simply. "I fear circumstances will make it needless for my daughter to return home very shortly."

"What a pleasure it will be for you."

"It will be nothing of the kind. There is no sympathy between Ethel and me. I would rather you understood from the first how things are. Ethel is the image of her mother, whom I married because for the sake of my name and title it was necessary that I should marry someone."

"Poor thing!"

To his astonishment there were tears in his housekeeper's eyes.

"She was not to be pitied," stilly. "She was the daughter of a poor country clergyman, and I made her the mistress of Devreux Court. I never crossed one of her wishes. She had her own way entirely."

"But you did not care for her. What if she loved you? Do you think living in a fine house and having plenty of money would make up to her for having her heart broken?"

"You are quite mistaken," said Sir Claude, a little angrily. "I never spoke an unkind word to her that I can remember. She just pined away. She died when Ethel was a baby."

"And your daughter is doubly orphaned since it is clear you show her but little affection."

"She was a girl. I had married for the sake of an heir. What did I want with a miserable little girl? Then almost from her cradle she guessed this instinctively. One of my nearest neighbours took a great fancy to her. There was a baby friendship between my Ethel and her youngest daughter, and so the end of it is that Ethel has spent more of her life at Jocelyn than at the Court, and has grown to look upon me as a hard-hearted monster because I won't give way to her whims and fancies as they do."

"And she is with Lady Jocelyn now?"

"Yes; but I shall write to-day to say that she is to come home at once."

"I had better order her rooms to be prepared," said the housekeeper, practically.

"Yes. It will be livelier for you."

Mrs. Grey opened her eyes.

"Miss Devreux is not likely to care to associate with anyone in my position."

"I do wish you would let your position alone," cried Sir Claude. "I should think Ethel would be delighted to find a companionable gentleman here instead of poor old Johnson."

Mrs. Grey smiled sadly. She doubted this. "Whether she is or not," continues Ethel's father, "makes no difference whatever to us. I should be more vexed than I could say if you left me because my daughter is coming home."

"I should be very sorry to leave you, Sir Claude. I have been happier here than I ever thought to be anywhere. I daresay I can manage not to be in Miss Devreux's way. Naturally she will be a great deal at the Manor with her friends."

"I fancy they will be too much offended at my sending for Ethel to invite her often."

"I confess you puzzle me," said the widow, simply. "You do not want your daughter, Lady Jocelyn does want her, and yet you insist upon the young lady's return. It is hard to understand it all."

"Ethel is the last of our line," Sir Claude condescended to explain. "Lady Jocelyn's view of who and what her husband should be differs from mine, that is all."

"I see."

She went back to her usual vocations, but no day had ever passed so slowly since first she came to Devreux Court.

"Can it be possible," thought the poor thing, putting one thin hand up to her head, "that my husband is the man Sir Claude fears to receive as a son-in-law? Is he the visitor who is coming to-day? Thinking me dead, does Keith seek to set another in my place?"

She was alone in her own room, and she sank down on her knees by the bedside, and burying her face in the counterpane sobbed as though her heart would break.

Poor wife, poor girl! By one sin she had become Keith Jocelyn's wife, but when she found the consequences of that sin, when she discovered that Keith remained an exile from home and all that he held dear because of her, then she repented bitterly.

She had sinned once from love of him, for his sake she sinned yet again. She could not bear the idea of her hero spending the best years of his life in lonely wanderings. She knew that while she lived he would never return to England, and she brooded over this in her lonely cottage in that sweet, quiet village until she hit upon a plan by which he would be free, by which she alone would have to bear the punishment of her sin, and Keith be free to return to the parents who idolised him, the home which was desolate without him.

Two other women had loved Keith, two who were even now struggling for his heart, but neither of them would have been capable of the sublime self-sacrifice which Magdalen suffered for his sake.

It was no less than to sink her own identity, to die, as it were, to the world and all who had ever known her, to be forgotten, neglected, discarded as surely as if she were indeed dead, and yet live on, suffering each heartache as keenly, feeling each neglect as surely.

It was a sort of death in life to which Magdalen condemned herself when she caused the sister she had not seen for so many years, and who came to her only to die, to be buried as "Mrs. Day," and with her own hand wrote to Keith Jocelyn to tell him that his wife was dead.

You understand it all now. The grave Keith looked upon in the country churchyard did not hold his wife. Magdalen deceived him for his own sake.

When the death that would not be merciful and come to her took her sister, Magdalen thought it would be easy to effect her purpose and correct the mistake made by the destroying angel.

She thought Keith would suspect nothing, he would be too glad to be free to doubt his freedom. Besides, he had never seen her sister, who had always lived safe and respectable among her mother's relations, while Magdalen and her disreputable father were travelling about.

When Keith looked upon what he believed her grave Magdalen was far away. Of course at the time of her alleged death the allowance he had made her stopped, but she had been very saving and could have kept herself for a year or so. As we know, though she did not need to do this, Sir Claude's advertisement attracted her notice, and she came to Devreux Court.

Strange as it will seem to you, when Magdalen worked out her plan and gave Keith his freedom she never suspected that in a few months' time he would be seeking to form fresh ties and to put another in her place. The poor, unloved wife fancied he had been made too unhappy through his first marriage to dream of contracting another.

When the clergyman's wife paid that visit of curiosity to Devreux Court the first suspicion came to Magdalen that her self-sacrifice might have been really only a cruel kindness, but hearing no more of Miss Devreux's engagement she put it down to idle gossip, but this morning's interview with Sir Claude had brought back her doubt.

Half an hour's reflection and Magdalen understood all. Her husband, returning to his native land, had fallen in love with the girl who spent

most of her time with his mother. It was the most natural arrangement in the world.

"He might have waited," thought Magdalen, bitterly. "It is barely three months since I heard of my death. Perhaps he thinks he has waited long enough. Oh! why do poets and painters tell us so much of the happiness of love? My love for Keith is stronger than any love I have ever known or read of, and yet it was never brought me happiness—never once."

But it was a far nobler, more unselfish love than Rosalie's. Even in this moment of supreme agony Magdalen never triumphed in the thought that the fair girl whom Keith would eventually wed could be no true wife, that if Heaven gave them children those children could not inherit the fair lands of the Jocelyns. Such thoughts would have been sweeter consolation to some women, they never came to Magdalen.

"It is only natural he should wish to marry," thought the unloved wife. "I hope if it is Miss Devreux Sir Claude will change his mind. And I shall see her day after day, and if she looks on me as something more than an upper servant she may give me her confidence, may talk to me of him. Oh! Heaven, could I bear it?"

She lunched with Sir Claude as usual, and preoccupied and troubled as he was the baronet noticed how very ill she looked.

"I hope it will be a false alarm," he said, faintly. "But I quite expect a gentleman on business, you will kindly see that we are not interrupted."

He never had been interrupted since Mrs. Grey came to be his housekeeper, but he forgot that.

"Which rooms would you like prepared for Miss Devreux, Sir Claude?"

"I really don't know. Please yourself."

"Is she fond of flowers? Would she like those opening on to the balcony?"

He shook his head.

"I will leave it all to you."

"It will be a sad home-coming," said Magdalen, moved with pity in spite of herself for the girl she believed to be her happy rival. "Miss Devreux is leaving old friends; I should like her to be comfortable here even if she does not stay long."

Sir Claude looked bothered.

"I wish Ethel had been more sensible."

"She is very young."

"Eighteen. But she ought to have had more sense."

"You must remember I don't know how she has displeased you."

"She has chosen to fancy herself in love with a man she ought to have looked on as a brother."

"Adopted brothers and sisters are dangerous things," with a wistful smile.

"And then of course she never sees that her cousin wishes to make her Marchioness of Allonby. I am not an ambitious man, I should never have interfered if only the girl had been moderately sensible, but to fancy a man who has spent the best years of his life wandering nowhere knows where, who was in love with someone else while she was a little child, why, I call it disgraceful."

"Has Lord Allonby been complaining to you?" with a look of scorn that any man should play such a part.

"Jack Tremaine? Oh, dear no. He would never do that sort of thing. He's a capital fellow. Much nearer her own age. Oh, she'll get over it all right, and when she's Marchioness of Allonby I daresay she'll be very much obliged to me for preventing her from throwing herself away upon Keith Jocelyn."

"Perhaps."

"You don't seem very convinced."

"I am not."

"I am afraid you are romantic."

"I think there is nothing in the world so sweet as love or yet so full of pain."

Sir Claude looked at her in bewilderment; she seldom spoke on such a theme. What a sweet face she had. He felt to wondering whether she had cared very much for "that fellow Grey," and if her love had been full of pain.

"It is a good thing you have no daughters," he said, with a touch of humour.

"Why?"

"With your sentiments you would let them marry clerks on a hundred a year."

"Certainly, if the clerks loved them."

"You believe in love."

"Believe in it! She whose life had been one torture of late years for the want of it!"

The carnation colour rushed into her beautiful pale face, but she only bent her head and answered, quietly, "Yes."

Sir Claude's mind was full of conflicting emotions. A year ago he would have said that he was an old man, for him "love," "sentiment" and all that sort of thing were over. Only yesterday as he heard Rosalie Norton appeal to him in her mother's name he had felt certain that his heart was buried in the grave of his first love.

But to-day, watching the various changes of Magdalen's speaking face, Sir Claude began suddenly to remember innumerable instances of men whose second love had been stronger even than their first.

His mind seemed to be full of cases where men of fifty turned had married young wives and loved them—ay, and been loved back again.

He was very comfortable with Mrs. Grey as housekeeper, but to-day he woke up to the fact that he could not expect to retain her long in that capacity.

A woman yet in her early prime, a woman whose face and manners would have done credit to the highest rank (poor Magdalen, in the earlier months of her marriage she had spent her whole time in arduous self-improvement that she might be "fit" for Keith's wife when he came back; she only ceased when she realised that he never would come back to her), Sir Claude came to the conclusion that life without the graceful widow would be unbearable. If Ethel worried her with airs and graces he would tell the young lady plainly to be polite. Rather than risk losing Magdalen he would make her Lady Devreux.

She little guessed all that was passing in his thoughts as she rose quickly, and said:

"It is past two o'clock, Sir Claude. 'Perhaps your visitor is not coming, after all.'"

The baronet shrugged his shoulders and repaired to the library. Magdalen went upstairs to her own room and sat down by the window. The curtains screened her from view. Unseen herself she could watch the whole approach to the Court.

Full half an hour she had kept her watch when she heard the sound of steps, and looking down she saw the only man she had ever loved, the husband who had wandered for years in foreign lands rather than recognise her as his wife.

She had never seen him since the stormy meeting when he laid down the terms of their married life. How changed he looked now. Older, of course, and bronzed with foreign travel, but there was a hope in his face, a glad pride in his smile which had been wanting then. Never in her life had she seen him look so happy.

Never in her whole life had she loved him so madly, so intensely, so passionately as now, when she saw him come as a wooer to Devreux Court, to ask that the fair young daughter of the house might fill the place which by every law of man and Heaven belonged to that lonely watcher upstairs.

The door was opened by the obsequious Joliffe, her husband disappeared, and Magdalen, leaning back in her chair with clasped hands, tried to realise the consequence of her self-sacrifice.

CHAPTER XIX.

REJECTED.

For aught that ever I could read,
Could hear, by tale or history,
The course of true love never did run smooth.

KEITH JOCELYN felt a strange uneasiness as he journeyed through the pleasant country to

the nearest station for Devreux Court. He himself had no very close intimacy with Sir Claude, and knew little of his character, but from all sides he had heard of his eccentricity, and it must be confessed he looked forward to his visit to his future father-in-law with sincere reluctance.

Keith was the heir of Jocelyn, and he knew that few nobles would have refused his alliance for their daughters. Though he was far too chivalrous to count himself worthy of Ethel he could not help knowing he was what society termed a "good match," and yet he felt very doubtful of his reception.

Sir Claude seemed to take a delight in being different to his neighbours. Who knew but his matrimonial views might also be opposed to theirs?

A strange remembrance of his unlucky marriage, the marriage which had followed upon no courtship or engagement, came to Keith. He was about to put another woman in his wife's place, a beautiful creature whom he loved as he had never loved Magdalen, and yet through all his journey the face which haunted him was not that of Eriol Devreux, but of Magdalen. Never in his life had he thought of her so kindly as now.

"She loved me," murmured the young man. "I have often doubted it, but now that I know what love is I understand that Magdalen loved me."

He found no carriage waiting at the station, and its absence annoyed him more than it had annoyed Rosalie the day before.

"I shall look like a miller when I get to Devreux Court, if I walk through all this dust," he said, impatiently, to a porter.

The porter apologised, but assured Mr. Jocelyn it was always so. There never was a fly at that station by any chance unless it was ordered beforehand.

A gentlemanly-looking individual, whose dress showed him to be a clergyman, came forward, and raising his hat asked if Mr. Jocelyn would do him the favour of taking a seat in his chaise. He was driving home and should pass the Court gates.

"I shall be most grateful," answered Keith, cheerfully, "if I shan't be in your way."

"Not at all."

It was a nice little chaise enough, just the kind of vehicle country clergymen affect. There was a small boy behind in buttons. The Rev. Mr. Brown was fond of comfort.

"Sir Claude does not expect me," Keith thought fit to explain. "I never thought it necessary to order a fly beforehand."

"Visitors are rare here. I daresay you have heard that, Mr. Jocelyn, though you have been away so long."

Keith looked intently at the speaker, and then held out his hand.

"Why, it's dear old Brown!"

Fortunately the clergyman did not resent the familiarity of the address. He had been Keith's coach long ago, and was delighted to recognise his favourite pupil.

"And you are living here?"

"Close by. I have been at Devreux for years now. It is a very pretty place, though rather dull to such a traveller as you."

Keith winced, as he often did at any sudden mention of his travels. Then he talked to his old friend of many subjects of mutual interest, told him of his sisters—Mr. Brown had stayed three months with his pupil at the Manor and knew the young ladies well—Louise's children and Maude's admirers, but he said never a word of Maude's friend who was the real cause of his coming to Devreux Court.

"How time passes!" cried the clergyman. "Why, I remember Miss Jocelyn a child of eight, and now she has been presented at Court!"

"We are all getting old," then, with an effort, "Do you see much of your parishioner, Sir Claude Devreux?"

"Much more than I did. Sir Claude has come out wonderfully these last three months. My wife says she never saw a man so much improved."

"There was room for it, I believe."

"Perhaps. I fancy he had grown old before his time, because he had no one to rouse him out of his library. Things are different now. Sir Claude comes to church every Sunday, and if I call and ask him for a subscription I have half an hour's chat with him, instead of the butler bringing me a cheque in an envelope with Sir Claude's compliments and he's too ill to see anyone."

"And what has produced this change?"

But Mr. Brown was not inclined to say. He and his wife were both of opinion that Sir Claude's housekeeper would one day become Lady Devreux, and why should they incur her ill will by revealing her secret before she announced it herself?

The clergyman knew quite well that Keith would be on Miss Devreux's side on the matter, so he was wary and turned the war into the enemy's country.

"May we hope to see Miss Devreux back soon? she has been away a long while now."

Keith Jocelyn smiled.

"She is too fair a flower to pine in solitude."

At the Court gates Keith got down, refusing the offer of his friend in need to drive him up to the house. Then he went on alone, his thoughts very full of the fair girl for whose hand he had come to ask.

It struck him as singular that his appearance caused no surprise. The butler looked as though uninvited visitors were an everyday occurrence.

"Sir Claude is in the library, Mr. Jocelyn."

"Will you take my card and say I wish to see him?"

Another moment and he stood face to face with Ethel's father.

No, his little love had been right, there was no resemblance between her and her only surviving parent, but what a courtly, dignified man he looked—more like a knight of olden days than a modern recluse.

"You are very welcome," said Sir Claude, taking Keith's hand and drawing forward a chair opposite his own. "I hope the earl and countess are quite well."

They were, and Keith said so, and then sat in silence for an instant. He very seldom felt at a loss, but the conversation had not begun as he anticipated. If only Sir Claude had expressed surprise at his arrival he could have had the whole business over in five minutes. As it was the baronet took his visit quite as a matter of course, and Keith felt, for the first time almost in his life, awkward.

"Did you walk from the station?"

"I was fortunate enough to recognise an old friend in your clergyman, and he gave me a seat in his chaise."

"Brown is a good fellow, much better than his wife. That woman will be the death of me, I feel certain, some day."

Keith was fuming with impatience. He had not left his darling, he had not travelled all these miles to discuss the merits of Mrs. Brown or Mrs. anybody else. He was longing to commence the real object of his visit, but Sir Claude seemed resolved not to give him an opportunity. "It is a long time since you were at Devreux."

"Yes, I have been away from England some years."

"So I heard. You are a good deal altered."

"Five years make changes."

"They have not made any here. Devreux looks exactly as it did five years ago. It is a whim of mine that nothing should be altered."

"It is very beautiful."

"Ay, it is a fine old place, not so grand as Jocelyn perhaps, but wilder and more picturesque."

This was not progress. Keith made a desperate effort.

"I daresay you were surprised to see me, Sir Claude?" he began, uneasily.

"Not the least in the world, my dear boy. I never am surprised at anything."

"I wished to write to you, but my father and mother were both of opinion that I ought to come, that such a course was more respectful to you."

The baronet smiled.

"Am I such an old fogey as all that? Well, I am glad to see you all the same, though you have taken care to let me know I only owe your visit to your parents. Will you stay for a few days; we are very quiet after London gaieties?"

"A thousand thanks, but I must get back to-night; they are expecting me."

"Well, I hope I shall see you in town before long. I am thinking of coming up to fetch my daughter; I am sure Lady Jocelyn must be getting tired of her."

"No one could do that."

Sir Claude smiled.

"Your family have been very kind to her," he said, simply, "but still her rightful place is at home, and I do not like to think that the last of the Devreux is almost a stranger here."

Here was Keith's opportunity and he seized it.

"It is about her that I came to see you, Sir Claude. Will you give me your daughter? I love her better than my life, and I will do what heart and strength can to make her happy; she shall never know a sorrow if only you will let her be my wife."

Sir Claude rose and paced the room two or three times.

"I wish you had not asked me this," he said, at last, stopping opposite the young man and speaking more sadly than angrily. "Your mother has been the kindest friend my Ethel ever had. Why must you disturb all that?"

"Why should I not ask you?" cried Keith, growing angry at the words. "Of course I am not worthy of such a treasure as Ethel, but at least, in a worldly point of view, I am her equal."

"Precisely."

"We are both free. We love each other."

"You surely do not mean that you have spoken to my daughter, that you have been so lost to all sense of honour?"

"What do you mean?" cried Keith, angrily. "What dishonour can there be in offering an honest love, an unsullied name?"

"I trusted my daughter to your mother's care. She at least should have saved me from this."

"It was not her fault. I spoke to Ethel without her knowledge. Of course I told her afterwards, and she and the earl are delighted at my choice."

Sir Claude continued his excited walk. In very truth the baronet was sadly puzzled. Seeing Keith's honest, noble face, hearing him plead his own cause, Sir Claude could but think that Rosalie Norton was mistaken; this man could never have been her lover. He resolved to try.

"Are you free?" asked the baronet, simply. "Are you free to ask any girl to be your wife?"

Keith flushed hotly. How could this secluded bookworm have learned the secret which had been kept from his own parents?

"I am free."

"Forgive the question; it is better that we should understand each other. You were not free six months ago? An entanglement which had happened before you went abroad still existed?"

"Yes," admitted Keith, "it existed."

"Then surely you are answered, Mr. Jocelyn. How could I, how could any father, give his daughter to you?"

Sir Claude was alluding to an engagement to marry a living woman. Keith was referring to the existence of his unhappy wife. They were at terrible cross purposes, and for Rosalie Norton's sake the baronet would not be more explicit.

"Poor girl!" he thought, sadly, "her tale was true enough; he admits it himself. The engagement formed before he went abroad continued till quite lately, till he saw Ethel, in fact. Well, I will keep my word. Rosalie's daughter shall have a chance of winning back her lover. It would be cruel kindness to Ethel to let her marry a man so utterly unprincipled."

"I do not see the inference at all," persisted Keith. "If I had come to you six months ago

I grant you could not have accepted me as a suitor for your daughter's hand, but now no thing stands between us. I am free."

"People's ideas of freedom differ," said Sir Claude, with an almost imperceptible shrug of his shoulders. Then, in a different voice: "I am more sorry than I can express that you should have come to me on such an errand. My daughter owes the happiest days of her life to Lady Jocelyn, but not even for your mother's sake could I give my consent to such a thing as your marriage with my daughter."

He spoke slowly and deliberately. There was no anger or excitement in his manner. Keith would rather far that Sir Claude had refused his suit with passionate rage. There was something in the fixed courtesy of the baronet's words that told the suitor he meant just what he said.

"I love her," urged Keith. "People say you do not care much for your daughter, Sir Claude. Why should you deny her to one who idolises her?"

"I do not think myself bound to give my reasons," answered Sir Claude, "but for the sake of the old friendship between our families I will explain a little of my meaning. I do not believe in your love for Ethel."

"Not believe in it!" fairly astounded. "Sir Claude, would you doubt my word?"

"I am looking back upon what I know of the circumstances of your life. No matter how I gained my knowledge, you will not deny that it is correct. When you left England you were not 'free.'"

"I acknowledge it fully."

"I know all," continued Sir Claude, "and I think you have behaved shamefully."

Keith rose. Devotedly as he loved Ethel there were some insults he could not stand. He was a Jocelyn, and they had ever been a proud and honourable race.

"That is sufficient," he answered, passionately. "I will not stay to hear your further opinions, Sir Claude. Fortunately everyone does not agree with you. I came here to ask for your consent to my marriage with your daughter. I little imagined the reception I should meet."

"I belong to the old school," returned Sir Claude. "I do not like to hear of a woman wronged and deserted."

"I do not take your remarks as applying to myself."

"As you please."

"At least you cannot always have your cruel will," cried Keith, triumphantly. "In less than three years my darling will be of age, then no one can keep us apart."

"If your affection for each other lasts so long."

"I have no doubt of that."

"Haven't you? We shall see."

The words rang in Keith's ears almost as a threat as he left the room. He would not see Sir Claude's offered hand; he would not listen to Joliffe's offer of refreshments, but set off slowly and dispiritedly down the avenue he had entered so joyously barely one hour before.

(To be Continued.)

OUR COLUMNS FOR THE CURIOUS.

THE SEA-CUCUMBER.—Dr. Johnson tells an extraordinary story of a sea-cucumber which he possessed. He forgot to furnish it with fresh water, and the creature became sick and dejected. Under this neglect it wasted away in a most remarkable manner. One by one it ejected its tentacles, its teeth, its digestive tubes. These fragments lay here and there scattered about the aquarium. Still, what was left of the creature was not dead. Its empty sack contracted at the least touch. As soon as fresh

water was provided the animal began to revive again, reproducing one after another of the lost organs, and at the end of two or three months appeared to be as well and as happy as before.

WARS OF THE HUMMING-BIRDS.—Whenever it happens that two of the species meet among my flowers, they signal the encounter with a shrill war-cry, and dash at each other in fierce antagonism. The spirit of Bellona inflames their souls. For an instant they close together, then give each other chase, and with the speed of meteors are lost to my view. Shortly after, the return of one alone announces that the victory has been quick and decisive. Diminutive as are these puny sprites, they are heavily charged with combativeness. The entire race are pugnacious and quarrelsome to an extraordinary degree, impudently assaulting each other, and birds of much greater size which venture into their neighbourhood or occasion them a fancied annoyance. Even the hawk is not safe from their attacks and has been seen worried and whipped by them. Mr. Bates remarks, in delineating their truculent disposition and the perpetual battles occurring in every flowery nook in the tropic where they congregate: "One will knock another off its perch, and the two will go fighting and screaming away at a pace hardly to be followed by the eye."

ONE OF THE SEA-SERPENTS.—The basking shark is one of the largest fishes of the group to which it belongs. It is sometimes as much as thirty-six feet in length. The circumference is enormous in proportion to its length. One which had a length of thirty-three feet measured twenty-four feet round. Its weight may be as much as eight or ten tons, and the height of its body above the ground may be eight or nine feet. The fish has the remarkable habit of floating on the surface of the sea and basking in the sun. It is generally seen between June and the beginning of winter; it abounds on the coast of Donegal, and frequents the west coast of Scotland when the wind is northerly. Westerly winds appear to bring it up the Channel, and during their prevalence it has been seen or cast ashore along the southern coast of England. These enormous sharks frequently swim in pairs, following each other, and the long, moving mass has more than once been described as a sea-serpent. On one occasion the sea-serpent was supposed to have been cast ashore on the Surrey coast; when examined it was already in an advanced state of decomposition, but was measured by the village schoolmaster and sketched, and considered to have a length of about seventy feet. Fortunately a few joints of its back-bone were collected, and afterwards examined. They presented all the characters of the vertebrae of the basking shark; and two large individuals lying end to end satisfactorily accounted for the supposed length of that sea-serpent.

ECCENTRIC MEN.—In Jessamina County, Ky., a man by the name of Briven would never enter his house except by the back door, and never leave except by the front. He selected early in life the spot for his burial beneath an old oak tree remote from all other graves in an open field, and there was buried. Mr. Mackay Duncan, of the same county, whose occupation, that of a carpenter, is altogether unfavourable to the pursuit of knowledge, is one of the most learned men, after a fashion, in America. He knows the date of every important event in the world's history, year, month, and day, and, when essential, the minute. His knowledge of the family history of all prominent people is something marvellous.

A STREET OUTRAGE IN OLD EDINBURGH.—One of the last brawls in which swords were drawn in the High Street occurred in 1705, when, under strong external professions of rigid Sabbath observance and morose sanctity of manner, there prevailed much of secret debauchery, that broke forth at times. On the evening of the 2nd of February there had assembled a party in Edinburgh whom drinking and excitement had so carried away that nothing less than a dance in the open High Street would satisfy them. Among the party were Ensign Fleming, of the Scots Brigade, in the Duke

service, had been a gentle Galbraith ten o'clock warn all men, with at a part save some houses, footmen In the Earl, of nance, a ceeding which he to meddle the ensig mood to braith, in footmen, Fleming would be the road. vants, ar spoke inc his swor servants powered young man the alarmed, commissi suffering glad to p knees bee attest), In Dev to carry whooping a Sunday the 8th P successiv The J seconds temporary bell meta which ha On the m drops upo rush the

Ther der 9th ult., residence The noble throughout last few covery. I state some the preser (his neph maid. Le Page Wood Matthew members the late B February at Winch where he fellowship inn in 18 Liberal in August, 1851 till 1851 till 18 December March, 18 Justice of Privy Cou Minister in Chancellor Sir William month was Hatherley

service, whose father, Sir James Fleming, Knight, had been Lord Provost in 1861; Thomas Burnet, a gentleman of the Horse Guards; and John Galbraith, son of a merchant in the City. The ten o'clock bell had been tolled in Iron Spire to warn all good citizens home, and these gentlemen, with other bacchanals, were in full frolic at a part of the street where there was no light save such as might fall from the windows of the houses, when a sedan chair, attended by two footmen, one of whom bore a lantern, approached. In the chair was no less a personage than David Earl, of Laren, General of the Scottish Ordinance, and Member of the Privy Council, proceeding on his upward way to the Castle, of which he was Governor. It was perilous work to meddle with such a person in those times, but the ensign and his friends were in too reckless a mood to think of consequences, so when Galbraith, in his dance, reeled against one of the footmen, and was warned off by an imprecation, Fleming and his friend of the Guards said: "It would be brave sport to overthrow the sedan in the road." At once they assailed the earl's servants, and smashed the lantern. His lordship spoke indignantly from his chair; then, drawing his sword, Fleming plunged it into one of the servants; but he and the others were overpowered and captured by the spectators. The young "Rufflers," on learning the rank of the man they had insulted, were naturally greatly alarmed, and Fleming dreaded the loss of his commission, though in a foreign army. After suffering a month's imprisonment they were glad to profess their sorrow publicly on their knees before the Privy Council (as the record attests), and thus to obtain their liberty.

In Devon, as late as 1855, it was the practice to carry children who were suffering from whooping cough, fasting, into three parishes on a Sunday morning. As a cure for sore throat, the 8th Psalm was read seven times for three successive days over the patient.

The Japanese have discovered that a few seconds previous to an earthquake the magnet temporarily loses its power. They place a cup of bell metal under a suspended horseshoe magnet which has a weight attached to its armature. On the magnet becoming paralysed, the weight drops upon the cup and gives the alarm, and out rush the family to the open air for safety.

LORD HATHERLEY.

The death of Lord Hatherley took place on the 9th ult., at a quarter past two o'clock at his residence in Great George Street, Westminster. The noble and learned lord had been seriously ill throughout the previous week, and, indeed, in the last few days no hope was entertained of his recovery. His lordship was in an unconscious state some time before death, which happened in the presence of the Rev. F. J. Wood, of Leeds (his nephew), his butler, housekeeper, and housemaid. Lord Hatherley (Right Hon. William Page Wood, F.R.S., second son of the late Sir Matthew Wood, Bart., many years one of the members for the City of London, and brother of the late Rev. Sir J. P. Wood, Bart., who died February 21, 1866), born in 1801, was educated at Winchester and Trinity College, Cambridge, where he graduated in high honours, obtained a fellowship, and was called to the bar at Lincoln's Inn in 1827. He was one of the members in the Liberal interest for the city of Oxford from August, 1847, till December, 1852, Vice-Chancellor of the County Palatine of Lancaster from 1849 till 1851, and was Solicitor-General from 1851 till he was appointed a Vice-Chancellor in December, 1852. He resigned the latter post in March, 1868, when he was appointed a Lord Justice of Appeal in Chancery, and sworn of the Privy Council. When Mr. Gladstone became Minister in December, 1868, the dignity of Lord Chancellor of Great Britain was conferred on Sir William Page Wood, who on the 10th of that month was created Baron Hatherley, of Down Hatherley, Gloucestershire. On October 15,

1872, he resigned the office of Lord Chancellor in consequence of failing eyesight, and was succeeded on the woolsack by Lord Selborne. Lord Hatherley was the author of "The Continuity of Scriptures, as declared by the Testimony of Our Lord, and of the Evangelists and Apostles."

Lord Hatherley hadied a comparatively poor man. Strange, indeed, for one who was a successful lawyer, for many years a judge, for four years Lord Chancellor with £12,000 a year, for nine years the recipient of a Chancellor's pension of £5,000 a year. Yet, still more strange when it is remembered that Lord Hatherley had no family; that he was not a society man, and that he was the plainest of men in all his habits and modes of living. He affected to despise wealth on the ground that it was wrong for a man leaving no children to leave a large fortune behind him. Yet he regularly took his pension, though failing health prevented him fulfilling those duties in the Court of Final Appeal which are expected of Law Lords. He was charitable, and his gifts to religious objects, especially in Westminster, where he lived and died, were numerous but not munificent.

The late Lord Hatherley was a Sunday school teacher at St. John's Church, Westminster, for upwards of forty years. He attended to his duties each Sunday, notwithstanding that he was Lord High Chancellor of Great Britain, and he only resigned his class in 1877 in consequence of bodily infirmity and failing eyesight.

Lord Hatherley's title becomes extinct by his death, and it is the third peerage of the United Kingdom which has been extinguished this year, the others being the earldom of Beaconsfield and the barony of Hammer. The additions to the peerage this year have hitherto been but two, Prince Leopold having been created Duke of Albany and Lord Odo Russell Lord Ampt-hill.

LINK BY LINK.

BY

A POPULAR AUTHOR.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

Oh, vengeance—sweeter art thou than the kiss
Of lips that love, or woman's soft embrace.

"If you will stand aside I will find the keys," says the nurse.

Her marvellous coolness remains quite unimpaired, and in her quiet tones no tremor of agitation is perceptible. Sim Blunt feels thoroughly ashamed of his own excitement as he obeys that calm behest.

Yet the moments seem like hours, and he can scarcely refrain from interrupting the systematic search she has commenced amongst the short grass, a search which leaves not an inch uncovered, and which never crosses the same spot twice.

"Here they are," continues Mrs. Matthews, rising.

Swiftly, deftly, she fits one to the lock; then withdraws a bar he had overlooked. The barrier is passed, the world is before them, the quondam gold-digger is free once more.

"Come along, ma'am, quick!" he cries, impatiently.

But the nurse is still occupied with the door. She has removed the massive key, and is transferring it to the outside.

"There!" she exclaims, triumphantly, as the bolt shoots home. "That will ensure us a quarter of an hour's start, I trust. I am a good walker, Mr. Blunt. You need not moderate your pace for me."

"I hadn't thought of doing so, ma'am," returns her companion, in an apologetic growl; and again he is ashamed, admitting to himself that in spite of heartfelt gratitude he had begun to feel that his preserver would be a clog upon the celerity of his movements, and that he was in truth longing to take to his heels and run away.

Perhaps Mrs. Matthews divines that unconfessed impulse, and desires to anticipate its expression.

"At this pace," she says, sadly, "we shall reach the bottom of the hill in four minutes. There are three roads which branch off in different directions. You shall take one, and I another."

"Durned if I do!" cries Mr. Blunt, sturdily, his manliness reasserting itself, and trying to atone by vehemence for previous short-comings. "I'll be durned if I desert ye, ma'am."

"There is no question of desertion," says the nurse, softly. "Your liberty is at stake and mine is not. If they overtake me they can do nothing, but if they overtake and overpower you—"

"They'll never take me alive, never no more," asserts Sim Blunt, grimly, balancing his chisel.

"Pray be prudent; do not undo all our efforts by rash folly," implores the nurse, apprehensively. "Go as quickly as you can to some respectable solicitor, convince him that you are sane and a man of means, then act upon his advice. Good bye. I wish you well, Mr. Blunt. Perhaps—perhaps we may never meet again."

She stops and puts out her hand. Those quiet tones are very sorrowful, and they quaver a little, now that all danger is for the time being past. Sim Blunt stops also, forgetting his fears in his astonishment.

"Never meet again!" he repeats. Why? Where are you going, my lass?"

"I do not know. I have not considered."

"Where do your friends live, ma'am?"

"I have not a friend in the world. I do not want friends. I never had but one, and he deceived me," cries Mrs. Matthews, the normal quietude of her manner broken up by some great sudden emotion.

Mr. Blunt looks at her curiously and compassionately, as though the hasty words had supplied a clue to something which had puzzled him.

"My dear," he says, with a grave gentleness, which sits not unbecomingly, "my dear, you'll never be without a friend, nor never want a friend, as long as Sim Blunt's above ground, arter all you've done for him. Have ye got any money at all?"

"I have five pounds," says the nurse. "You may take half of it, if you like."

"Lor' bless ye, lass, I wasn't thinkin' of myself," answers the quondam gold-digger, hastily. "I can lay my hands on as many hundreds, or thousands, for the matter o' that, in a day or two if I like. But I'll take one sovereign, if you'll lend it me, seein' as them durned thieves at the 'Sanitarium' cleaned me out long ago. And I'll meet you to pay you back and talk over the futur' at the Knollys Arms at Astonburne either to-morrow or the next day, if you'll go and stop there."

"I will go," says Mrs. Matthews, taking out her purse and handing him the coin.

Mr. Blunt detains the hand, holding it awkwardly and cautiously, as though he feared to hurt it by the pressure of his rough fingers.

"Remember what I say, my dear. Sim Blunt's your grateful friend, now and always. That's enough words. Good bye."

But he forgets to release her hand in the intensity of his gaze until a vivid blush overspreads the comely face, and the nurse glances at him timidly.

Then Mr. Blunt drops the little palm as though it had been red hot and walks away with hasty abruptness.

"It's impossible—it can't be so—it don't stand to reason—a chap like me," he mutters, reflectively, as he goes. "Why, she's a lady, a'most. I'm blowed if six months in that blessed Sanitarium wouldn't make me quite mad, if six weeks have given me such a thought as that."

So he puts away the thought which savours of insanity, and goes with those long, swinging strides of his along the road he has chosen, one which a finger-post tells him leads "To Duffel-pool—15 miles."

"Oh! the joy of being free once more. He whistles as he walks. He would shout with very gladness, but that he fears labourers coming early to their work will hear him and put pursuing keepers upon his track."

"To Duffelpool—15 miles." All being well he will be there by breakfast time, to square a little debt of vengeance he owes Doctor Tom Evans, before the latter starts upon his rounds. "Pray be prudent," said the nurse.

Well, he will follow her advice, so far as Doctor Tom is concerned at all events, reserving imprudence and reckless disregard of consequences for that more fierce retaliation which shall follow, the wiping out of the long score run by Sir Marmaduke Knollys.

It is of the baronet rather than of his other foes, the doctor and the lawyer, that the fugitive thinks, as the first red flush of dawn appears in the sky, as it did that morning when, watching between green, level hedgerows as he is doing now, he saw the sun rise like a great ball of fire and heard larks chant to it a Parsee-song of praise.

He is certain now that the other pilgrimage, of which he is forcibly reminded as its features repeat themselves with such exactness, was to a grave which never existed, save in a villain's imagination, and he is convinced that the desperate effort to stifle investigation, by shutting him up in a madhouse, points to some dark secret on which it will be his joyful duty to let the light of day.

It will be a case of "vengeance made easy." By no immediate act of violence will he put himself in the wrong. First the secret—the exposure—the shame. Next the complete and final reckoning.

The birds are all awake and calling to one another, the sun climbs higher; he begins to meet labourers going to their work. Two or three times his quick ear advises him of vehicles approaching from behind, and creeping behind a thick hedge or a tree he lies hidden until the possible danger has gone by.

But the keepers do not come, and he blesses, audibly and fervently, the woman whose cool courage liberated him, and whose quick wit left no means neglected to delay the pursuit which was so imminent.

"Doctor Tom Evans's, mate? There's his house, and a little path to the right leads round to the surgery," says a hedge-carpenter, going to work on a gate at the entrance to Duffelpool.

He conjectures from the sight of Mr. Blunt's screwdriver and chisel that he speaks to a brother of the craft on tramp, and is somewhat surprised not to be solicited for "a copper" as the tramp moves on.

Sim Blunt follows the little path to the right. He comes to an open door with the word "Surgery" printed upon it in letters partially effaced by wind and weather. The door, if it indicates anything, points to a second door, a few steps along a narrow passage laid with floor-cloth.

Outside is a window, almost screened by shrubs. Mr. Blunt gently parts one of them until he can look into the room. Then a glow of repressed anger comes into his deep-set eyes, for he recognises his enemy, one of the three who signed the order for his incarceration.

Half a dozen cat-like steps along the passage and he stands in the presence of the man on whom he has sworn to be revenged.

"The—aw—the mania!" cries Doctor Tom, recoiling in alarm, and looking wildly but vainly about him for the means of escape or of defence.

Mr. Blunt feels convinced of what he had before suspected—that this foe has wronged him unwittingly, upon the strength of a foolish but honest conviction fostered by designing rogues. As certainly as he has been the victim of their schemes, Doctor Tom is the dupe and tool.

Once assured of this, Mr. Blunt's honest wrath becomes considerably mollified, though he disguises the fact, and his queer visage shows no sign of relenting.

"Don't ye stir or make no outcry if ye vally your life," he says, in a deep, menacing growl.

And the hair of Doctor Tom Evans of Duffelpool almost stands on end with fright.

"Wh—wh—what can I do for you?" he asks, tremblingly.

"Order breakfast, I'm hungry," answers Sim Blunt; and his slit of a mouth suddenly stretches from ear to ear in one of his noiseless grins, whilst his little twinkling eyes almost disappear in cavernous recesses.

"Certainly—aw—I'll see about it at once," responds Doctor Tom, with cheerful alacrity at the prospect of escaping from the madman's dangerous proximity.

"No, yer won't," says the latter, with a threatening movement of the chisel, before which his companion hastily retreats to the window. "You'll stand here and shout, with my hand upon your collar, to make sure you don't bolt. I s'pose there's a servant-gal in the house somewhere as can bring a tray of cold meat and a jug of ale. I won't trouble ye for tea or coffee, seein' as it's past yer own breakfast-time," adds Mr. Blunt, politely.

So food and drink are ordered in, with minute observance of all needful precautions, and the madman gives explicit directions for the doctor's behaviour during the domestic's presence in the room.

"If you say a word beyond what's actually necessary, or if you stir hand or foot, I'll be down on you like a thousand bricks," growls Mr. Blunt, warningly. "What's this mess you were makin'?"

"A mustard-plaster." "Tain't strong enough—not half strong enough," says the madman, with another silent grin. "You can be makin' it stronger whilst the gal fetches the meat and beer. Come, look alive."

"It will burn the patient's skin off," protests Doctor Tom.

"So much the better. What's the use of half doin' the thing?" argues Mr. Blunt, oracularly.

And the doctor discreetly submits, adding mustard from a packet which stands near, until a plaster is produced such as no sane person would venture to apply.

He lingers over the operation in the hope of propitiating his visitor, and by the time it is completed the refreshments ordered have been placed upon the table. Yet the madman does not commence his attack upon them.

"That will do," he says, reflectively. "Now put it on."

"What!" "Unbutton your collar, unfasten your shirt, and lay it on your chest. It is for the chest, ain't it?"

"Yes; for—aw—for the chest of one of my patients."

"Then put it on," repeats the madman, with an ominous growl of command. "Or p'raps you'd rather I did it for you."

"No—no, I will do it," says Doctor Tom, with a sigh of despair.

"Flat, press it well down—that's right. Now button your coat over it. That'll do. Doctor Tom, I looks towards you, and likewise bows. You can sit there and see me feed."

As he speaks he empties a glass of beer at a draught and attacks the joint with hearty goodwill. A rare and piquant condiment the withings and stifled exclamations of the unfortunate medico seem to supply.

"A capital thing mustard, werry useful in your profession," says Mr. Blunt, reflectively. "Makes people sick, don't it?"

"It is an excellent emetic when mixed with warm water and swallowed."

"Umph!" comments the madman; and he ruminates upon that information until the meal is finished.

"I should like to know how to mix a strong 'metic—it might be useful some day," he soliloquises. "Here's a jug o' warm water, and my beer glass 'ull do to mix in, seein' as I've drunk all the ale. How do the plaster act, sir?"

"It hurts infernally. My chest will be raw for a month," says Doctor Tom, with a groan.

"Ay, sharp remedies is needed in serious cases," remarks Mr. Blunt, philosophically. "Now for this here 'metic as I want to know how to mix. Will this much mustard do?"

"Too much—a great deal too much, except for a case of poisoning," says Doctor Tom, apprehensively.

"Then we'll suppose it is a werry bad case of poisonin'. How will this do?"

"You would kill the man."

"I don't think so," says Mr. Blunt, reflectively. "However, we'll try it just by way of experiment. Drink it down."

"I won't. Flatly—I won't," cries Doctor Tom, roused to desperation.

"I think you'd better," says the madman, quietly, tapping his chisel. "If 'twere a tea-spoon between poison and cold steel you'd choose the poison, wouldn't yer? Werra mustard and water mayn't be pleasant, but 'tis harmless, so drink it down and I'll be off. You may thank your lucky stars, Doctor Tom, I feel disposed to let you go so easy, considerin' the grudge I owe ye for clappin' me into an asylum, as sanna a man as yourself, for nothing at all."

"Same!" repeats the sufferer. And then he holds his peace. In his terror he sees the lurid light of madness in Sim Blunt's deep-set eyes, but he does not venture to say so. In terror for his life, and willing to make any sacrifice to preserve it, is Doctor Tom Evans of Duffelpool.

"Drink it down!" commands his tormentor, savagely. "I give ye three warnin's, mind, and no more. Warnin' once!"

Piteously, with his hand upon his smarting chest, the unhappy doctor looks in the madman's face and finds it inflexible.

"Warnin' twice!"

A hasty glance around—a wild thought instantly relinquished, of merriving himself to a struggle. Doctor Tom takes the glass into his trembling hand.

"To the dregs, mind, and quick, for the third warnin' is comin'," growls Mr. Blunt, with assumed anger. "Warnin'—"

But as he lifts his hand to strike, the emetic is raised to Doctor Tom's lips, and three-fourths of the mixture are honestly swallowed with almost instantaneous effect.

Sim Blunt has satisfactorily avenged him of his adversary, and with a grim chuckle of delight he walks away.

CHAPTER XL.

We are deceived. We should make common cause, Banded ourselves together, true allies, Against a common wrong.

Through the tortuous labyrinth of city streets crawls a hansom, taking the nearest cut to Lincoln's Inn Fields, and in the hansom sits Lavinie Knollys, née Millefleurs, pondering the arguments she shall employ to induce Monsieur Sharp, the advocate, to undertake her case.

It may seem a strange determination that the should select to defend her interests a lawyer who numbers Sir Marmaduke Knollys amongst his clients, but the Frenchwoman has thought the whole thing out in that sapient little head of hers, and her final decision is not so unwise as at first blush it may appear.

If "Forbes, on the British Marriage Laws," she reasons, be a trustworthy authority, nothing can upset her legal claim to be acknowledged as Chandos Knollys's wife.

But it is absolutely necessary to find a solicitor who will supply the sinews of war and fight the case in court after court perhaps against the baronet's wealth on the conviction that ultimate success is certain, and that eventually he will be recouped for his outlay and rewarded for his exertions.

But to find a legal speculator of this description will surely be a most difficult task. A stranger would be a less likely person than one who knew all the parties concerned.

The girl has that to say to Monsieur Sharp which might incline him to favour her application. If not, no harm will have been done. It

is impossible she should in any way suffer for having preferred it.

"I desire to see Mr. Sharp," she says to a cadaverous youth with a quill pen behind his ear, and whose countenance is smudged as though he had been weeping inky tears.

A dispute about the fare with an unprincipled cabman who looks upon a young Frenchwoman as his rightful prey has excited her, and the climbing of flight after flight of steep stairs has taken away her breath.

Her voice sounds sharp and agitated, and half a dozen heads pop up with startling rapidity from behind the long screen of the office desk to regard her with an interested stare.

"What name, miss? I'm afraid Mr. Sharp is engaged," says the cadaverous youth, looking back at his fellow slaves, and winking the eye that is next them.

"My name is Mrs. Chandos Knollys, of The Hall, Astbourne," says the girl, with dignity.

The free and easy manner of the ink-smudged clerk changes, and the heads of his companions disappear as if by magic.

"Perhaps you'll step in here, ma'am," he suggests, respectfully, opening a door which reveals a closet about large enough to hold three people with ease, in addition to a table and a newspaper. "I'm sure Mr. Sharp will make a point of seeing you at once. I'm sorry we haven't anything more readable than the 'Times' to offer a lady."

Her prediction is verified. In less than two minutes mademoiselle hears the "ping" of a hand-bell, and the cadaverous youth reappears to conduct her to his master's presence.

"Take a seat, madam," requests the solicitor, briskly. "I was not aware Mr. Chandos had taken to himself a wife. May I ask when the happy event took place?"

Then mademoiselle unfolds her tale, and to the first portion thereof Mr. Sharp listens carefully enough with half-closed eyes and a manner suggestive of sudden drowsiness. But with the earliest mention of Scotch ground he becomes alert and vigilant, watching her as keenly as a terrier watches for a rat.

"Have you any money—a few hundred pounds, or so with which to fight your case?" he asks, when she has finished.

"I have not one pound," replies the girl. Mr. Sharp relapses into thoughtful silence for a minute or two.

"I am sorry for you," he says, at length. "No respectable lawyer will take you up; it would be no joke to enter the lists against Sir Marmaduke's long purse. I am at a loss to comprehend why you came to me, knowing, as you must do, that his legal business is entirely transferred."

"There you mistake yourself," interrupts mademoiselle, triumphantly. "We are alike deceived, Monsieur l'Avocat, you by the father, and I by the son. We will help each other, and both regain our rights."

"Explain yourself," says the lawyer, impatiently.

"There are not many days," continues mademoiselle, "since a groom is instructed to ride with a note to Griffiths and Holt, solleceiteurs to the family, as you know. Tout de suite, Monsieur Holt arrives, the parchments are prepared, the papers are signed—it is said in the house that a new will has been made. How say you, Monsieur Sharp, that all the legal affairs to you have been transferred?"

"Sir Marmaduke must have broken faith."

"It is a peculiarity which descends and is inherited, to break faith. If Sare Marmaduke live, he has deserted you. If he die, as it is certain ere long, will Sare Chandos be more reliable? Help to put me in my proper place, monsieur, and you shall have secured a friend at the Court whose influence shall fail you never."

"I cannot give you an answer off-hand. I will consider it, and let you know in the course of a week. Where are you staying, Mrs. Knollys?"

"Here is my address," says the girl, handing

him an envelope, whilst her eyes flash with pleasure at this tardy recognition of her acquired surname. "I shall daily expect your letter, monsieur, for one week. If I receive it not I go to another avoué. Bon jour."

Then the lawyer and his impecunious visitor bow to each other, the hand-bell is sounded, and mademoiselle departs. Two or three clients are waiting, but Mr. Sharp, after glancing at their names, says their business must rest awhile.

He sits in his office chair and trims a pen, a process he finds favourable to deep thought.

"The girl told the truth throughout, I believe," he soliloquises. "The baronet has thrown me overboard; I made too sure of him, after the 'Sim Blunt' episode. Well, I must run down to the Sanitarium to-morrow and investigate that little mystery. I always intended to do so, but my time has been so much occupied. The Frenchwoman is Mrs. Knollys without a doubt, and will be Lady Knollys shortly. I must take up her case, if only as a hold upon her husband. Whether or not I sell her, eventually, must depend upon the way in which events shape themselves. Come in."

"Telegram, sir," says the cadaverous clerk. Mr. Sharp tears open the envelope carelessly, a man too much accustomed to receive such missives even to feel curiosity concerning their contents.

"Known to Sharp. Sim Blunt has escaped by assistance of female keeper. Have secured country since daybreak without success. Shall I wire baronet?"

"I think not; ifancy Mr. Blunt may settle his own score and mine too if I let him alone," murmurs the lawyer, with a quiet smile, as he takes a form from his desk and pens a reply.

"Sharp to Iretton. Do not wire or write to baronet. Never mind about Sim Blunt, let him go. Keep matter as dark as possible."

"I rather think," says the solicitor, meditatively, when the telegram is despatched, "I rather think that if I keep quite still for a day or two I shall receive a communication from Sir Marmaduke imploring me to help him out of a worst fix than the last. I will take care not only to make my own terms, but to see that I get them, next time."

CHAPTER XLII.

Leaves have their time to fall,
And flowers to wither at the north wind's breath,
And stars to set—but all,
Then hast all seasons for time own, oh, Death!

"I am ill and lonely; the sight of a hopeful young face would do me good. Confer a favour on one who will soon be beyond all human kindnesses by dining with me to-morrow night at six o'clock."

The extract is from an important-looking missive sealed with the Knollys crest and motto, which the meek footman has delivered at Colin Cathcart's modest lodgings, and the young man accepts the invitation gladly.

He feels grateful for the courteous consideration with which the baronet has ever treated him, so different to Chandos's supercilious insolence or to my lady's freezing hauteur. Even if he felt disposed to visit upon Sir Marmaduke the sins of wife and son, it were not in his nature to refuse a petition which seems to him doubly pathetic because it comes from one who is so rich in all the blessings of this life save health and family affection.

Nor is the face an unhelpful one which he carries to that tête-à-tête dinner. May's courage has shamed him, May's determination to look only on the bright side has roused him from the listless despondency into which he had sunk to the detriment of both soul and body.

He looks less like a walking ghost; he is rapidly regaining strength, and Doctor Gwynne and Prometheus Hornblower, who chanced to be lunching with him when the meek footman came to the door, were inspired to crack a joyful joke about Sir Marmaduke's temerity in venturing to invite to dinner a man who pos-

sesses such an appetite as their host has just exhibited at his own table.

But it would seem that the baronet expects a guest with an appetite, to judge from the preparations he makes to regale him. Three or four telegrams are despatched to London for rare delicacies that cannot be procured in the neighbourhood.

An interview, half an hour in length by the clock, is held with the cook, and every dish is discussed with the gravity which would befit a measure of state policy.

Gardeners are called in and are instructed personally about fruit and flowers; the keepers have their orders concerning the game which will be required; the butler is interrogated respecting rare, generous old wines, worth their weight in gold, which he would positively refuse to produce, if he only dared, for the delectation of anybody save an acknowledged bon vivant.

Sir Marmaduke has dined very great people in his time, epicures of the first water, foreign ambassadors, local celebrities, cabinet ministers, successful generals, men who have stood before kings and eaten and drunk with them to boot, but he never displayed more fastidious nicety in the arrangement of a menu than for this little dinner of two, given to the merest nobody—a young railway engineer.

In health and in spirits he rallies marvellously as the hour approaches. With Crimp's assistance he makes a careful toilette, displaying unwonted solicitude about the set of his collar and the tying of his cravat.

Some strong influence almost effaces many of the deep lines which illness and anxiety have engraved upon his haggard face. He will have the shutters closed and the lamps brought in, although it is daylight still, on the plea that one cannot dine properly except by artificial illumination.

The soft radiance deals kindly with his swollen features, nor emphasises the ravages of evil passions, wasting diseases and racking care. He shows at his best, a man who was once handsome and who is personable still. The valet gazes at him in astonishment, as at one who has taken a new lease of life.

At his best also Sir Marmaduke shows, as with dignified hospitality, courteous and courtly, he plays the host; and as those exquisite dishes, on which so much thought has been lavished, are brought in and the generous wines cheer the heart of man, the liking which Colin has always felt for his entertainer deepens to positive regard. For the baronet's manner towards him is not merely genial, it bespeaks friendship or even affection.

When dinner is practically over and they sit looking at one another across the flowers and the queer silver dishes, fruit-laden, old family plate which money could not buy, the bond of confidence strengthens. Whilst they toy with the dessert and sip their wine Sir Marmaduke waxes garrulous, speaking of the past, and Colin listens with interest he cannot explain.

"I have sown the wind, I am reaping the whirlwind," says the invalid, sadly. "I am experiencing how bitter may be the ending of a misspent life. Soon my place will know me no more, and not a soul will regret that I have passed away."

"Believe me, I shall regret it," answers Colin, earnestly.

"I should be glad to think so. I should be glad to believe, Colin, that no matter what may come to your knowledge sooner or later with respect to my history you will judge me mercifully, pitifully and not unkindly, as one who suffered as well as sinned."

"If I had any right to judge you it should be thus."

"Will you promise it to gratify a sick man's whim?"

"I promise," answers Colin, wonderingly, grasping the baronet's outstretched hand.

"My wife and Chandos will both be glad to get rid of me," continues Sir Marmaduke. "I wish I had such a son as you, Colin, to close my eyes."

"And I wish I had such a father as you to make the future smooth for me."



[THE AVENGER.]

"I may be able to do something. Tell me your troubles," says the baronet, eagerly, with a gleam of pleasure in his bloodshot eyes.

Then the young man, impelled by an impulse he cannot define, unbosoms himself as he has never done to any human being, even to May Pole-Gell.

He has been reticent to his Astonburne friends, unduly so perhaps. Doctor Gwynne and Prometheus Hornblower know vaguely that he seeks links in a chain of evidence, that he desires to unravel a mystery connected with himself, but as to the nature of that mystery they are not informed. He has not thought proper to volunteer information, and delicacy has forbidden them to seek it.

But Sir Marmaduke appears to have no such scruples. His pointed questions elicit every particular of the young man's career; and, more especially, a minute account of all that has transpired since Colin's ribs were broken in the lane.

"Do not despair," he says, at length. "All things come in time to him who knows how to wait. I know May Pole-Gell's character well; you may trust her utterly."

"I do trust her," answers Colin. "But, Sir Marmaduke, even if her father's consent could eventually be gained, ought I to receive so much when I can give so little? Contrast her wealth with my poverty, her patrician name with my plebeian one—"

"Plebeian! plebeian!" interrupts the baronet. "My nameless condition, if you will."

"True, I had forgotten. You are assuming that Miss Wraxall told you the simple truth."

"It has never occurred to me to doubt it," says Colin, in surprise. "What object—"

"What object has she in secluding herself from all society, and in cultivating eccentricity which borders upon madness? Can any information be implicitly accepted which comes from so peculiar a source? Forgive me for saying, Colin, that you have been too ready to credit a tale which slanders your own mother."

"Forgive you! I thank you, Sir Marmaduke, for the reproof. What do you believe?"

"I believe," answers the baronet, emphatically, "that your mother was dishonourably wooed, but honourably won; that her humble lover, Sim Blunt, assisted in the elopement, and witnessed the ceremony, then emigrated to a foreign country. I believe that the young couple were glad to borrow his name for urgent private reasons on the gentleman's side, and that within a year he wearied of his wife's rustic charms and would gladly have persuaded both himself and her that their union was not indissoluble. You will observe that my theory tallies in every way with Miss Wraxall's statement, except that it marries your mother to him who had engaged her young affections, not to the humble lover whom she had repeatedly rejected."

"What became of my mother if your theory be correct?"

"She is without doubt dead," answers Sir Marmaduke, wiping his moist brow. "Her sudden disappearance implies that her days were suddenly cut short, either by the visitation of God, by her own hand, or by that of her unworthy husband."

"You do not think he murdered her?" cries Colin, aghast.

"No—no, not that; that were impossible," exclaims the baronet, with strange agitation. "But there might have been a struggle, an accident, a—a—we waste our breath in futile conjectures. Some day, perhaps, you will know all."

"So far as I can see," muses Colin, sorrowfully, "the only person who can throw any light upon the whole mystery is this Sim Blunt of whom you have spoken; and his bones may lie bleaching on a foreign strand—"

"Danged if they are though!" growls a deep voice behind him; and at the sound of it Sir Marmaduke drops a glass of wine he is in the act of raising to his lips.

Then, as Colin turns his head, he sees the door open slowly, and behind it a tall man of broad, bony figure, with a face thin almost to emacia-

tion, a slit of a mouth, the lips compressed with bitter, vindictive resolution, and deepest eyes which glow like coals of fire.

"Sim Blunt is here," growls the tall man, lifting one of his rough, red hands with a threatening gesture. "He have been here once or twice afore, he have, and been sent away agin—once with a lie, once on a fool's errand, once in the charge o' keepers who locked him up in a lunatic asylum. And now, for the fourth and last time, Sim Blunt have come back to call that durned villain to his account."

His great red finger points straight over the guest's shoulder to the ashen face of the host, but even as Colin's glance follows it the bulky frame of the baronet sways in his chair, the massive head lurches forward and drops upon his breast.

It is but the work of an instant to reach and raise him, to prop up that heavy head with pillows, to shout for Mr. Blunt to summon speedy assistance, a demand to which the quondam gold-digger responds with malevolent immobility.

"Let him alone! He'll come round fast enough, I'll warrant. He'll wish hisself senseless agin when the reckonin' begins—"

"Mr. Blunt!" cries Colin, in a sharp, stern whisper, "hand me the long bright spoon lying before you on the table."

There is an awful fear in that imperative command, and Sim Blunt is moved to ready obedience. Burnished like a mirror is the piece of plate, and the young man steadies his trembling fingers to hold it so that it almost touches the baronet's pale lips. But the bright surface remains quite undimmed, and that awful fear becomes a more awful certainty.

"The reckoning has begun elsewhere," says Colin, solemnly. "Your foe has long been suffering from heart disease, amongst other ailments, and Doctor Gwynne warned him to avoid excitement, as a sudden shock might prove fatal. Sir Marmaduke Knollys is dead!"

(To be Continued.)



[THE MYSTERIOUS CHAMBER.]

THE MYSTERIOUS DISAPPEARANCE OF HELEN HARGRAVES.

A NOVELETTE.

(COMPLETE IN THIS NUMBER.)

My father was the rector of a small country parish in the south of England; he was a hard-working, zealous man, absorbed in the duties of his profession, and enthusiastic about his work. Nearly all his time was devoted to his people, and on my mother devolved the entire care of us children—a goodly band of six as healthy, happy, and unruly juveniles as could well be imagined.

I was the third of this happy band, my two seniors being brothers. The only time my father could spare from his parish work was given to their education, and when they both left home for a public school the hours he had given to instructing them were suddenly and without any explanation and, as far as I was concerned, most unexpectedly transferred to me, and then for the first time I realised that my path in life would be that of a governess or companion.

I did not relish the idea at first, but gradually got accustomed to it, and after a little while settled down steadily to work, mastering the rudiments of Latin and Euclid under my father's tuition, whilst my mother taught me music and French, and took care that needlework and household knowledge should not be neglected.

When I was about eighteen I began to be anxious to enter on my career, yet when it came to the point both my parents seemed to find it harder to part with me than they had imagined.

I had one or two offers of situations that I should have been well contented to accept, but neither my father nor mother seemed satisfied with them, and it was not till I was past my nineteenth birthday that an opportunity of starting in life for myself presented itself that seemed too good to all of us to be allowed to let slip.

The great folk of our neighbourhood were a certain Sir Clarence and Lady Dunsterville, and Sir Clarence and my father were fast friends. He was a regular thorough-going country squire, a staunch Conservative, ready to die for Church and Crown any day, and father being of the same way of thinking the two got on together capitally.

Lady Dunsterville was fond of us girls, and always ready to help mamma when she was in any trouble or perplexity in any way she could.

Mamma had confided to her some time before her hopes and intentions about me. Lady Dunsterville had then, I remember, looked at me very doubtfully with raised eyebrows, and had rather thrown cold water on our idea, I imagined, by something she had whispered to mamma.

However, it was through her eventually that I got my first situation, and from a friend and relation of hers came the offer which even my parents thought too good to be refused.

"I don't know what we shall do without you, Marion," said my father, whilst my mother wiped her eyes.

"No, indeed, it is horrid you're leaving us," chimed in my sisters. "Now the boys are gone the house will be as quiet and dull as anything."

"But, you see, I have my living to earn. I must make a beginning," I said, with some dignity.

And after a short discussion mamma sat down and wrote to Mrs. Leigh, of Marwell Priory, saying that I should be glad to accept her situation and become her companion.

"I'm glad you are to be companion and not governess," she said, with a sigh of relief, as she sealed the letter. "Teaching is very trying; but

I have no doubt you will get on with both Mr. and Mrs. Leigh. I remember meeting them at Lady Dunsterville's the year Katy was born, and I liked them particularly. Marwell Priory is a splendid old place, I believe."

"And Marion is to act as secretary to Mr. Leigh when occasion requires," said father. "He is busy, I hear, looking over and making extracts from a number of curious papers and manuscripts that have lain forgotten in the strong room of the Priory for years. You will find that interesting, my child."

"Yes, father," I answered; but as I looked at his grave, kind face and my mother's still wet eyes I felt that when I did leave them it would require something far more than ordinarily interesting to drive the thoughts of home from my mind and make me forget those I had left behind.

However, such thoughts were useless now; the die was cast, the letter was sent off accepting the post, and in a week's time I was to start for the Priory.

I left home with many tears, and wondering how long it would be before I saw the loved faces I had bidden adieu to again. For the first hour I felt very sad, and as I sped along in the railway, for the first time alone, very desolate; then the novelty of the scenery around me, the beauty of the weather—it was a lovely October day—and the excitement of entering on life for myself began to tell on me, and my spirits rose again, so that when I descended at the station and asked if any conveyance from Marwell Priory was waiting for me I had quite recovered my equanimity.

A pretty pony-carriage was ready for me, and soon I was driven along through deep lanes shaded by tall trees, still well covered with leaves, and amidst woods brilliant with autumn hues, till a turn in the road brought us into full view of the Priory.

An involuntary cry of admiration escaped me, the old groom who was driving me looked gratified.

"It's considered a fine place hereabouts, miss," he said.

"It is lovely," I cried. "I never saw any place half so beautiful."

And indeed Marwell Priory merited all the praise and admiration that could be bestowed on it. Situated on the side of a hill, commanding a splendid view of the surrounding country, and backed by extensive woods now mellowing into the richest autumn tints, whilst the ruins of what had once been a magnificent abbey could be seen peeping out from amongst the trees not far from the mansion.

We soon drew up at the door, and I confess I felt somewhat awed as I followed the stately butler across an enormous hall, floored and panelled with oak and hung with family portraits and suits of armour, to a huge drawing-room, where I was requested to take a seat till Mrs. Leigh was informed of my arrival.

The room, to my modest notions, appeared so vast and magnificent I felt lost in it, and seating myself on the most unpretending chair I could find I waited with a beating heart for Mrs. Leigh to enter.

The first sight of her removed all my fears.

"Pray excuse me," she cried, throwing down her garden hat on the nearest sofa. "I did not hear the carriage come to the door; I was with Nash in the conservatory. Miss Vernon, I hope you have had a pleasant journey and are not tired?"

She looked kindly at me and shook hands with me in a very hearty way.

"I've heard of you all so often from Aunt Donastille," she went on, "that I don't feel as if you were a stranger. I'm so very glad to see you and feel sure we shall get on so well together; but you must be hungry, and lunch is ready for you. Come into the dining-room, and afterwards I will take you upstairs and show you your bedroom."

Mrs. Leigh was a small, slight, pleasant-faced woman of about forty-five, but looking younger. She was very active and sprightly, a good rider, a splendid walker, passionately fond of the country and country pursuits, and thinking there was no spot on earth so beautiful as her own home.

We soon became quite friendly and confidential, and when we rose from table she put her arm through mine to lead me upstairs to my room.

"It is rather a journey," she said, after we had gone up a flight of stairs, down one long corridor and up another, then up a smaller flight of stairs, till we stood in a passage looking out over the park, and with the ruins of the old Priory just in front of its windows. "You will not be far from others though, and will be quite close to the room where Mr. Leigh is busy half the day with his old documents and manuscripts. These are your rooms. I hope you will like them, though they are old-fashioned; indeed this is the oldest part of the house," and she threw open the door of a large oak-panelled chamber, out of which opened a smaller one, approached by a flight of three oaken steps.

"That is your dressing-room," she said, opening the door and showing a curious, irregular-shaped little room that looked as if it must have once been an oratory.

The door creaked on its hinges and, I knew not why, a cold shudder passed over me as I glanced towards it.

"It is very quaint and curious and extremely pretty," I said, turning away from the dressing-room and looking round the bedroom as I spoke. "How old everything here must be!"

"Yes," she replied. "Mr. Leigh takes great pride in his old furniture, some of which has been in the house for four hundred years at least. They say this part of it was once connected with the Priory yonder," and she pointed to the ruins, "but that may be merely a legend. We have not discovered any passage leading to it. Now I will send Sarah to help you unpack, and when you have rested and like to come down you will find me in the small drawing-room. We dine at seven, and my son, Gerard, and Miss Helen Hargraves will be here."

Miss Helen Hargraves! I could not get the

name out of my head somehow; it kept sounding in my ears, and I felt a curious sort of anxiety to see the young lady. Mr. Gerard Leigh too. I had had no idea that Mrs. Leigh had a son; it was the first time I had ever heard him mentioned.

My bedroom now claimed my attention. It was furnished with old-fashioned, dark oak furniture. The bed hung with deep red damask, and the floor covered in the centre of the room with a thick Turkey carpet. The fire-place was large and open and the chimney huge; but the dressing-table was prettily ornamented, and a well-filled bookcase stood not far from a pretty little writing-table between the two great windows that looked out over the park.

I glanced towards the dressing-room door, and hesitated to open it and enter, but just at that moment Sarah came in and began unpacking my box, and feeling a little emboldened by her presence I opened the door and entered.

One long, narrow window gave light to the little room. Two quaint, high-backed chairs, a curious oak table, a huge oak coffer and press, formed its contents, whilst on the oak-panelled walls hung two or three curious old portraits.

I saw Sarah eyeing me curiously as I stood quite still, silently contemplating the strange little apartment.

"Would you like me to put your dressing-things in the oak cabinet, or will you have them on the table here, miss?" she asked, presently.

"Oh, here," I replied, quickly, pointing to the pretty table in the bedroom, and leaving the oak cabinet at once, shutting the door behind me.

"Well, it is more cheerful like, miss," she replied.

"Yes, much," I answered, with another shudder. "Does anyone sleep near me, Sarah?"

"Mrs. Messenger, the housekeeper, sleeps in the next room; but one, miss, and I next to that, and the rest of the servants in the storey above you. Can I do anything more for you, miss? Will you go down now or rest a bit first?"

"I think I'll rest a little," I replied. "Thank you very much; there is nothing more to be done now."

So Sarah left me.

It soon grew dark, and I lit the big candles that stood on the mantelpiece, for when the dusk began to fall my room assumed a strangely gloomy appearance, and I kept involuntarily glancing again and again at the door of the oaken cabinet with a vague feeling that I should suddenly see it opened by some invisible hand.

However, it remained closed, but I was not sorry when Sarah returned and informed me that the dressing-bell would ring in a few minutes, and that she would be glad to help me to dress if I wished it.

Although I was quite accustomed to performing my toilette myself, and without any assistance from a maid, I accepted her offer, and as soon as I was dressed went downstairs to the drawing-room and sat there alone till Mrs. Leigh appeared, followed by her son.

Gerard Leigh was a fine, handsome fellow of about two-and-twenty, a lieutenant in a crack regiment, as I afterwards learnt, rather an extravagant, thoughtless young man as regarded his money matters, but a favourite with all who knew him, and adored (of course) by his parents, whose only child he was.

We had not been five minutes in the room together when a carriage drove up to the door.

"Who is it, mother?" asked Gerard, in surprise. "I did not know that you expected company to-night."

"Nor do I. It is only our old friend and travelling companion, Helen Hargraves, who is coming to spend a few weeks with me. Don't you remember her?"

I saw his face change suddenly as his mother spoke.

"Yes, I remember her very well. Did she—did I never tell you we met two years ago in Switzerland?" he replied.

"Well, to be sure. I do remember something about it," replied Mrs. Leigh; "but it was only for a day or so, wasn't it?"

But Gerard had no time to reply, for the door opened and Helen Hargraves entered.

When I say that she was the handsomest and most fascinating girl I ever set eyes on I do not think I am exaggerating. In many respects I do not think I ever saw a face and form to equal hers.

She had thrown off her cloak and hat in the hall, and her dress of dark-coloured velvet fitting her tall, exquisitely proportioned figure faultlessly showed her off to the best advantage, whilst her perfect face, crowned by a wealth of the darkest hair, was brilliant with the flush of health.

"Dear Mrs. Leigh," she cried, "I am late as usual, I fear."

Then her magnificent black eyes fell on Gerard, and I saw a startled look in them for an instant, but it passed off at once and was replaced by an almost haughty expression as she shook hands with him.

"I had no idea you were in England," she said, coldly.

"Let me introduce you to my friend, Miss Vernon," said Mrs. Leigh, presenting me.

She looked at me for a moment doubtfully, then a smile that made her face positively lovely played over her delicately cut though firm mouth, and she gave me her hand. I felt at once that she should be friends.

The evening passed off very pleasantly, and ere we retired to bed I was feeling quite at home, and it was not till I got back to my own room that a sense of strangeness stole over me again.

Helen Hargraves knocked at my door almost immediately I got into it.

"May I come in and talk to you a little?" she said, in her bright voice. "What a queer old room this is! And where does that door lead to?"

And she pointed to the door of the dressing-room.

"Ah! don't open it," I cried, in sudden terror. But it was too late; she had run up the four steps leading to it and opened it with the peculiar grating sound I had noticed before.

"Why? Is it a Bluebeard's closet?" she laughed, looking at my scared face. "You look quite pale, I declare! What a quaint little place, and what odd old pictures!"

And she raised the candle she held in her hand and examined them attentively, whilst I, somewhat recovered from my momentary panic, stood close beside her.

"It is a very strange place, this old Priory," she said, at last, turning away. "There is a curious legend connected with it."

"Oh! please don't tell it to me now," I cried, in terror, "or I shan't sleep a wink all night."

"What! you are superstitious?—you really believe in the old tales of ghosts and hauntings?" she cried.

"I won't say I don't," I answered, "at least I fear—though I am brave and unbelieving enough by daylight—at night my courage vanishes, and I begin to tremble at every sound."

We were descending the little flight of steps as I spoke slowly, and I could have declared that as we set foot in the bedroom again I heard a stealthy footfall on the threshold of the dressing-room door at its top.

"What is it?" cried Helen, who noticed my start; "you are quite nervous, I declare." "Well, this is a grim old room, but remember I am next door to you, and I believe in nothing and fear nothing."

She turned and shut the dressing-room door as she spoke, and I noticed how her beautiful mouth closed with an expression of firmness, almost obstinacy in its lines that surprised me.

"Well," I replied, "I am certainly the weaker vessel of us two. If I am frightened I shall tell you."

"Do," she replied, thoughtfully. "But I should never see a ghost (if there are such things to be seen), I am not gifted with second sight. I am far too earthly and earth-loving a creature to hold communication with the other world, though" (and she spoke deliberately and firmly) "there is nothing I should so much desire."

"Oh, Helen!" I cried, quite appalled.
"It's true," she nodded. "But I must not keep you up talking nonsense. Twelve o'clock, I declare."

As she spoke a sudden gust of wind howled round the house and moaned sadly in the broad chimney of my room, whilst the great clock in the tower slowly tolled out midnight.

"We shall have a storm, I believe," she said, calmly. "Good night, Marion. Call me if you are frightened."

And she left me.

If I were frightened. How I envied her her calm at that moment. I crept to bed all of a tremble and lay palpitating with the bedclothes huddled round me, and then tired nature asserted her supremacy and I fell asleep.

I almost smiled at my fears when I woke next morning, with the sun shining cheerfully into the room, and I presently had the courage to open the door of the dressing-room. It looked so quiet and innocent of anything supernatural in the morning sunshine that I felt quite ashamed of myself, and resolved that I would put my books and work into it and transform it into a little sort of boudoir, where Helen and I might sit of an afternoon when Mrs. Leigh was out visiting or was otherwise occupied.

My duties I found were very light, the principal of them being helping Mr. Leigh to arrange his manuscripts in the curious oak-panelled room not many doors from mine, but this did not take me above two or three hours daily, and the rest of my time was practically at my own disposal. So Helen and I, and often Gerard Leigh as well, took long walks and spent much time together.

I could not quite understand the terms on which Helen Hargraves and Gerard Leigh were. Sometimes it seemed to me they had at one time or another been very intimate; at other times they treated each other almost as strangers. Yet I was certain Gerard Leigh admired Helen intensely—as indeed who did not?—and sometimes I thought I could detect a look of hidden tenderness in his eyes when he spoke to her, though hers never responded to it.

I had become quite accustomed to my quarters by the end of a week, and on the eighth night of my sojourn at the Priory retired to bed, feeling as secure and comfortable as I used at my own little home, and never even thinking of the fears and fancies that had troubled me on the first night I had slept beneath its roof, and in a few minutes I fell asleep, turning over in my mind a curious question I had heard Gerard put to his mother that day and her answer to it.

"Mother, who is Helen Hargraves?" he had asked.

And she had replied:

"Oh, nobody. She has no friends. I met her abroad three years or more ago."

"No friends!" I wondered at that, so young, so beautiful, and accomplished too, and no friends! How sad! And then I fell asleep.

I awakened suddenly; not as one usually awakens from sleep, but broad awake in one moment, my heart beating violently. I felt—I know not why—that I was not alone, and as I peered cautiously out into the room, lit-up in part by the pale rays of the autumn moon, I heard the door of the little dressing-room open with the grating sound I had noticed on the first night of my arrival at the Priory.

I was spell-bound with terror; my tongue close to the roof of my mouth; I could not speak; I could not move, but as I had started up out of my sleep, staring fixedly before me.

A stealthy footstep crossing the room now fell on my ear; it was approaching. In a moment more my ghostly visitant—for a being from the other world I felt sure it was—would be before me.

The cold perspiration started out on my forehead. For an instant I thought of Helen Hargraves, but she was sleeping doubtless quietly in the room next me, and I could not cry out for help, something kept me dumb and helpless.

In a moment more—not five feet from the bed—a figure seemed gradually to shape itself out of the darkness—the figure of a tall, grey-haired woman, clad in a dark-coloured robe of

ancient make, and wearing a dark veil or muffler around her head. It was a strange, weird figure enough, but, oh! the horror of that colourless face, of those supernaturally bright, burning eyes, of the fiendish expression of the thin, cunning features and the diabolical smile that curled the pale lips.

She fixed her eyes full on mine and raised her hand with a commanding gesture, gliding nearer to the bed as she did so. But terrified nature would endure no more, and silently I fell back on my pillow in a swoon.

Next morning when I awoke, or recovered—I at first could hardly make up my mind which it was—I felt dazed and still quite upset from the effects of my terrible vision. Had it been a dream? That was what first came into my mind, but when I thought well over it I felt certain it had not been a dream, that I had really seen with my waking eyes that terrible figure.

I glanced nervously towards the dressing-room door; it was shut, as I had left it the night before, yet that it had been opened during the night I felt certain. Had not I heard the peculiar grating of its hinges as I woke so suddenly from my first sleep?

"How ill you look, Marion!" cried Mrs. Leigh, when I came into the breakfast-room. "Robert, you mustn't let her over-work herself with those manuscripts."

"Indeed it is nothing, and I did no work at all, I'm afraid, either yesterday or the day before. I've got a headache, that's all, dear Mrs. Leigh," I answered, eagerly.

I saw Helen Hargraves looking at me keenly as I spoke, and almost blushed.

"I'm afraid you didn't sleep well," said Gerard.

"Not very well," I assented.

"Did anything disturb you?" asked Gerard, curiously.

"Yes, I thought I heard a noise—I don't know what it was—like a door opening," I faltered.

"One of the servants moving, I daresay," replied Mr. Leigh. "I hope your head will soon be better, Marion, for to-day I really did want your help."

"Oh! I shall be quite ready to help you. I feel better already," I replied, eagerly; and nothing more was said on the subject.

But Helen was very silent all breakfast-time, and I caught her looking searchingly at me once or twice.

I had four hours of rather hard work that day with Mr. Leigh, helping him to decipher some curious old documents, and when we had finished I made so bold as to ask him if there were really any legend or story connected with the part of the Priory we were in, as I had been told.

"Well, my dear child," he replied, thoughtfully, "I believe there is some curious tale. A lady of the house of Leigh, not particularly remarkable for the beauty of her life, is said to walk, as the country folks call it, and at certain intervals is supposed to revisit the scene of her ill-doings. It is a long time now though since anyone has imagined that they saw her. I can remember fifty years ago, when I was quite a boy, our old nurse vowing she had seen the lady of Leigh, as the apparition is called, and having an illness and raving of the lady's terrible eyes. Why, Marion, how pale you look. I quite forgot you had a headache, and I've made you work too long. Dear, dear! how selfish of me."

"It is nothing," I replied, recovering myself. "I am all right and not a bit tired."

"Go and take a walk with Helen Hargraves," he rejoined, "the air will do you good. By the way, how do you and Helen get on? Do you like her?"

"Yes, very much. We get on capitally. How lovely she is," I answered, eagerly.

"Yes," he replied, almost uneasily, "very pretty—it's a pity—" and then he stopped, and putting away my writing things I left the room.

I found Helen and Gerard Leigh had gone out, so I took a drive with Mrs. Leigh, and almost before I knew it it was dinner time. There were guests that night, and the evening passed

quickly, so quickly that it was half-past eleven o'clock before I realised that I should now have to retire to my room alone, and perhaps have again to face the fearful apparition I had seen the night before.

I lay awake in ghastly terror for some time, each minute expecting to hear the door turn on its hinges and the footsteps glide across the room. But I saw nothing and heard nothing, though till nearly sunrise I lay awake with a horrible, vague sensation that the terrible figure of the lady of Leigh was not far from me, although invisible to mortal eyes.

Two or three nights passed and I was not disturbed by my ghostly visitor again, but I slept so badly and suffered so terribly from nervous terror that I grew pale and thin, and Mrs. Leigh began to fear that the air of Marwell Priory was too keen for me.

"Marion," said Helen to me one morning, "something has happened to you. Why don't you tell me what it is?"

"Oh, it is nothing," I replied, "only my own folly and imagination, I daresay; but you know how nervous I am."

"What! you have seen or heard something that has frightened you?" she said, curiously.

"I daresay it was only imagination," I replied, evasively.

"If you fancied you saw the lady of Leigh don't mention it to either Mr. or Mrs. Leigh," she said, "it portends a death in the house, and I know Mr. Leigh has, like you, more faith in old legends than he cares to show."

I shuddered again; the terrible eyes of the lady of Leigh seem to be burning into my soul again.

"Ah! it was the lady you saw," she cried.

"I certainly did see, or imagine I saw the figure of a woman, and I believe she came out of the oak dressing-room," I replied.

"Marion, really? Or were you dreaming?" she answered.

"I was not dreaming certainly," I rejoined.

"Oh! how I should like to see it," she cried, "and find out what it wants. What a pity two people can't see a ghost together. But there—I fear I have not enough faith in the existence of another world to believe in spirits."

"Helen!" I cried, quite horrified.

"Ah! you see I have not had the advantages of a good education," she replied, half sorrowfully, half sarcastically. "I was brought up anyhow, and taught nothing, or anything. I've lived an odd sort of life, Marion, and I don't know what the future may have in store for me. However, tell me more about this odd business. I wonder the lady did not come to me instead of you. We have more in common I should say."

She spoke bitterly, almost passionately, and seating herself beside me she listened attentively whilst I told my tale.

"Well," she said, almost carelessly, "the lady always appears at intervals. She won't trouble anyone again for some years, I suppose."

But Helen was mistaken.

That night I had scarcely got into bed (it was rather late when I did so, and it seemed as if all the other inhabitants of the house were sunk in sleep, so quiet and silent was it) than the vague sensation of not being alone again oppressed me, and I sat up in bed, my nerves on the rack, expecting each moment to see the figure of the lady appear before me. I heard footsteps gliding cautiously about the room, the rustling of a silk robe, a sigh, then the creaking of the dressing-room door, and all was still. The lady did not appear that night, and after a while I sank into a troubled sleep.

My sleep was disturbed, however, by a long dream, of which when I awoke I retained but an indistinct impression. I could only remember that the lady had something to do with it—that she had spoken to me, and urged me to rise and follow her, that I had done so, and that she had shown me the entrance to a secret passage, and then—my remembrance failed me.

Several nights more passed over, and the feeling that the lady of Leigh was constantly near me seldom left me, and I became paler and thinner and silder daily.

I can hardly express or explain the curious feelings that took possession of me, the strange ideas that filled my brain. I seemed only to live in the remembrance and expectation of night—the days were nothing to me.

I felt this state of things could not last much longer—an end must come to it soon, or I should die or go mad. I almost longed now for the appearance of the lady, and resolved if she should again show herself that I would speak to her.

During this time Helen Hargraves often questioned me as to whether I had again seen anything, and I avoided the subject and replied as shortly as I could to her questions. I felt an inexplicable repugnance to talking of what had happened, and wished I had never let Helen know of what I had seen.

I had not long to wait for a repetition of the visit of the lady of Leigh. Three weeks later I had to undergo the ordeal, out of which I barely escaped with my life.

That night I woke suddenly as before, and close at the foot of my bed, one hand drawing aside the curtain, and the other raised as if beckoning me to follow her, her terrible eyes fixed on mine, she stood. The room seemed lighted up by a faint, unearthly glare that enabled me to see every line and wrinkle on her awful face.

I gazed on her, my hair rising on my head in terror; my lips moved as if to speak, but no sound came from them.

"Who are you? What do you want with me?" were the dumb sounds they would have uttered.

The fiendish smile I had before noticed hovered about the lips of the apparition. I do not know if she spoke, or how she made me understand it, but I knew it was her will that I should rise and follow whither she should lead me.

A desperate struggle between my will and hers ensued; my soul loathed to submit itself to her power. I struggled to remain where I was, but again that thin, white hand was raised in command, again the word "Follow" was heard by the ears of my soul, and, spite of myself, I rose and found myself following the terrible form across the room to the door of the dressing-room.

She ascended the steps slowly, looking back at me over her shoulder with an authoritative gesture once or twice, and I followed on like one bereft of reason and free will.

Before one of the old pictures she paused, touched something in its centre, and a secret door was disclosed, and beyond it a black, yawning chasm.

The apparition turned triumphantly towards me and beckoned to me to approach, pointing onwards as if it would have me pass it and enter the darkness before it.

A feeling of terror, so intense that it beggars all description, took possession of me as I observed the diabolical delight on the terrible features of the apparition, and for one moment I thought of resistance, but it was for an instant only; in another I had followed the lady of Leigh across the dressing-room. I was close to her; her thin, long hand was extended towards me as if to grasp my shoulder, when suddenly a figure came between me and the awful spectre—a figure that caused the terror that held me to unloose me, that restored me to free will, and unbound my shackled senses—the figure of my mother.

"Mother! mother!" I cried, stretching out my arms to her with a wild cry.

The spectre was gone. The room had resumed its usual appearance; the moon shone brightly into it. I was alone.

With one long shriek of agony I turned and fled. The door of my bedroom was thrown suddenly open and Helen Hargraves entered.

"Marion, what is it? Who gave that awful scream?" she asked.

I clung to her, sobbing with terror.

"Mother—mother; where is she?" I cried. "She was here just now, but I cannot find her."

Helen looked bewildered, and setting the

candle down on the table began to soothe and question me. The clock struck three.

"Did you fancy you saw your mother, Marion, dear?" she said. "That must have been a dream, you know. Mrs. Vernon is not here."

"But I saw her—there in the dressing-room just before the lady vanished," I replied.

"What! You have seen her again?" asked Helen.

"Yes, yes; but, oh, Helen, what has happened to my mother? I believe she saved me from some great danger—from death perhaps—but how came she here? Oh, I feel something has happened! She looked so bright and beautiful, and that awful spectre fled before her. Oh, Helen, what has happened?"

For the first and only time I ever saw it an expression of sudden fear passed over Helen's beautiful face. It quickly disappeared, however, and she listened to the whole account of my terrible experience without any expression of terror, and then rose and, taking a candle, walked towards the dressing-room.

"Oh, don't go in there, Helen!" I cried.

"Why not? There is nothing here, Marion, I assure you," she answered, and stood looking at the picture and passing her white, shapely hand slowly over it. What does she want? I wish I knew. I wish she would come to me, I heard her mutter.

"Don't say that, Helen!" I cried, almost angrily. "Shut the door and come away. I will never go into that horrible room again as long as I live. Oh, I do not think I can stay in this dreadful house any longer. And mamma! Oh, what can have happened?"

Helen stayed the rest of the night with me, and scarcely had the servants gone down when I heard footsteps coming hurriedly along the corridor, and there was a knock at my door. Mrs. Leigh entered.

"What! up already?" she said, as she saw Helen and me. "I am glad of it, for I am grieved to say you are wanted at home, Marion, and—"

"Oh, mother! mother!" I cried, seizing Helen by the arm. "I know it! You are dead. You came to save me—"

"Not dead, dear; don't cry so; but taken suddenly ill. I have ordered the carriage for you at once to catch the 9.5 train, and breakfast will be ready in ten minutes. I am so grieved for you, my dear."

The tears stood in her kind eyes as she spoke, but I little heeded them. I felt convinced my mother was dead, and hurried on my clothes as if my haste in dressing would bring me the sooner home. Helen and Mrs. Leigh accompanied me to the station, and in a few hours I was at the vicarage again. In a home changed and desolate indeed! At five minutes to three that morning my mother had died, and my name was the last on her lips.

The shock to us all was a terrible one; it prostrated my father, and came to us all with a severity beneath which we could only bear in silence. My father could not rouse himself from his grief. He took a confirmed dislike to his old home, and six weeks after my mother's death accepted a chaplaincy at Bonn for two years, and soon we were all settled in our new home and beginning a new life in a foreign country.

Somehow we heard but seldom from England during those two years. The Leighs were abroad in Spain, we heard from Lady Dunsterville, and she alluded vaguely to the "late trouble in their household" without telling us further about it, so that we were left in ignorance as to what the trouble might be; the rest of her letter was filled up with small scraps of village news, and in her subsequent epistles she did not allude to the matter again, so we remained in ignorance of its details.

Two of my sisters married during our residence at Bonn, so when we returned to England again our party was a small one, and very dull we found it at first after the gaiety of our German life.

A few months after our return we heard that the Leighs were back at the Priory, and were expecting Gerard home from India, whither he had been absent with his regiment. Mrs. Leigh

was coming over to the Dunstavilles on a visit, and was anxious, Lady Dunsterville said, to see me; so it was arranged I should drive over and meet her there at lunch the following week.

My first inquiry, after asking after Mr. Leigh, was for Helen Hargraves, and with surprise I saw how the faces of all present fell as I mentioned her name.

"Didn't you hear about her? Did you not know of what took place not two months after you left us?" asked Mrs. Leigh, later on, when we were left alone.

"No, certainly not. I heard nothing," I replied, a curious terror creeping over me.

"Well, my dear, she suddenly disappeared, and from that day to this, though we have done everything in our power, we have never been able to find her—there! I have frightened you; how pale you look, Marion!" she said.

"Tell me all about it! How did it happen?" I gasped.

"Dear me! I ought not to have told you so suddenly. I forgot what friends you were," she replied. "I will tell you: When you left us, my dear, we grew very fond of Helen, and as she had no settled home we offered her one with us, which she at once accepted, and she took your place as helper to Mr. Leigh in his arrangement of those old manuscripts, in which she took great interest. In about a month afterwards she suddenly and mysteriously vanished, leaving behind her everything she possessed, and we have been able to discover positively no clue to her fate. It has caused us terrible grief and anxiety also. At one time we were disposed to set down a very sad motive for her flight, but time has proved that we were wrong. Gerard, you know, had met her abroad, and had rendered her some slight service as regarded the recovery of some letters she had written to a Hungarian count, to whom she was at one time engaged. We suspected she might have eloped with him, but it has been satisfactorily proved that he was in Russia on a diplomatic mission at the time she disappeared, and his absence for even a day from his post would have been an impossibility. I wonder will the mystery of her disappearance ever be cleared up?"

"Where did she sleep?" I asked, in a trembling voice.

"Sleep?" rejoined Mrs. Leigh, looking at me in suspense. "Why, when you left us and she entered on your duties she insisted on occupying your rooms, and—"

"The lady of Leigh—the lady of Leigh!" I cried, clasping my hands. "Oh, it is she! Helen is dead, I feel sure!"

"What about the lady of Leigh?" cried Mr. Leigh, in an astonished voice, who had just entered the room. "What is the matter, Miss Vernon? Annie, my dear, what has happened?" and he looked quite agitated.

"Oh, I never told you!" I cried, "and I was wrong, but I feared to disturb you, that I saw the lady twice when I was in that room, and if my mother's spirit had not saved me I verily believe I should have disappeared as poor Helen Hargraves did later on!"

"You saw the lady?" whispered Mrs. Leigh, in horrified accents. "Oh, Arthur! is it possible—is there any truth in the legend?"

Mr. Leigh looked terribly agitated.

"You know my weakness, and that I do put some faith in those old wild tales," he replied.

"Tell me everything, Marion," he added, seating himself beside me.

And though I dreaded and hated to repeat the tale, I gave him a minute description of all that had befallen me that awful night—the last I had passed at the Priory.

"This must be looked into at once," he said, when I had finished. "Marion, have you courage to return to Marwell with us and help us to unravel if possible this mystery?"

At first I hesitated; even after more than two years I did not feel as if I could sleep in peace beneath the roof of the Priory; but when I thought I might be of service in discovering the fate of Helen I consented, and the next day we set off to the Priory to begin our search.

A strange, nervous trembling took possession of me as I once more set foot in the queer old

chamber in which I had passed so many hours of misery and terror, and I cast my eyes around, half expecting to see the figure of the lady appear suddenly before me.

As Mr. Leigh threw open the heavy shutters, however, and the bright sun shone in, giving everything a common-sense or common-place kind of look I recovered myself.

"Nobody has slept here since she occupied it," whispered Mrs. Leigh.

And I noticed that dust lay thickly on the furniture, the room did not look as if it had been entered for many a day.

The dressing-room door opened with its usual grating sound—a sound that made my blood run cold, and I felt as if I could hardly enter the oddly-shaped little room. Mr. Leigh was before me, however, and signed to me to follow him.

"Was this the picture?" he asked, pointing to a portrait of a knight clad in armour. "I suppose it is."

I felt surprised.

"Yes, it was that one," I replied. "How did you know?"

He did not reply; he was busy passing his hand just as Helen Hargraves had done the night she came to my assistance over the picture.

"I can find no spring," he said, at last. "Can you not remember, Marion, where the apparition placed her hand?"

How vividly the whole horrible scene came before me as he spoke. I felt again the numbing influence of the all-powerful will that had compelled me to rise from my bed and follow the spectre that night, and mechanically I raised my hand and touched the hilt of the knight's sword.

Scarcely had I done so when the panel on which the portrait was painted slid back, and before us we saw a narrow opening and a flight of irregular stone steps leading downwards.

"Good Heavens!" I heard Mr. Leigh mutter. "Then there is some truth in the old legend."

And looking at Mrs. Leigh I saw she was deadly pale.

"Bring lights," he cried. "Marion, what are you about?"

And he seized my arm, for obedient to the strange influence whose power I again experienced I was about to descend the steps in the darkness.

"She is there," I said, looking into his face wildly. "She is there."

"Wait," he replied, with calm authority.

And his voice seemed to break the spell that bound me, and with a sigh I shook off its influence and was myself again.

Lights were soon brought, and cautiously Mr. Leigh, followed closely by me and his wife and by two or three servants, descended the narrow, steep staircase.

"Stop, beware!" he cried, suddenly. "The steps are broken away here, be careful. Wait till I have gone on a little."

I peered forward; four or five of the steps had fallen away; there was a dark, black chasm below them. What did it contain?

Mr. Leigh passed safely down the broken steps and turned to help me and his wife to descend them. Scarcely were we in a place of safety when, raising my candle, its rays fell on a strange form lying prone at the foot of the stairs on the stones.

"What is it?" I whispered, shrinking back and clutching Mr. Leigh by the arm. "There is something there."

He put me gently aside and went on quickly.

In another moment he was kneeling beside the remains of Helen Hargraves.

"I knew it—I knew it!" I cried, wringing my hands. "This is the lady of Leigh's work—that is where I should have been lying now if it had not been for my mother—her spirit saved me."

Silent and appalled we gathered round the remains, easily to be recognised yet, although they had lain there two long years. Doubtless she had followed the terrible lady, overmastered by her superior will as I had been, and falling

down the treacherous stairs had perished, or—and I shudder as I remember the cruel, long white hand that had been stretched out to grasp my shoulder—had the terrible lady treacherously hurled her down the narrow steps, and then vanished, leaving her in a living tomb?

The finding of the body was soon known far and wide, and a large crowd assembled to see it laid in the little churchyard a day or two later. The prevalent opinion was that Miss Hargraves, who, it was known, had a taste for exploring, had discovered the spring in the picture, descended the secret passage, that the panel had by some chance closed on her, and that she had been left to perish miserably from starvation, whilst her friends were searching far and wide for her in other directions.

It was only ourselves who suspected the real—or what I firmly believe to have been—the real state of the case, and who felt that even after death the fierce spirit of the lady of Leigh delighted yet in crime, and had undoubtedly enticed the unfortunate girl to follow her, and then consigned her to a terrible doom.

Needless to say the staircase was at once walled up. It was said that one or two curious relics were found in the passage that led from it to the ruins of the Priory, tending to confirm some old legends which Mr. Leigh had found written down by some remote ancestress, amongst the old manuscripts he had been looking over.

The room too which Helen Hargraves had occupied on the night of her disappearance was for ever afterwards kept locked and closed, and though all these things happened long ago, the spirit of the lady of Leigh has never since appeared to any of the inhabitants of Marwell Priory.

BESSIE WILMOT.

A SHORT STORY.

(COMPLETE IN THIS NUMBER.)

SHE went behind his chair and said, sympathetically:

"Are you tired, Archie?"

"Yes—tired and discouraged. My picture is far from my ideal of what I fancied it would be, and the old, terrible gloom seems settling down upon me again. I was born under an ill star, Bessie, and have perhaps inherited failure as my life's portion."

Bessie Wilmot put her kind, brown palms upon his hot brow and stroked it gently.

"You are overworked," she said; "you will feel better to-morrow after a good night's rest. You have already recognition from the best artists, not only in the west but in the east."

Bessie Wilmot's mother had married Archibald Andrews's father six years previous to the opening of our story. He had been a widower for many years.

Archie was handsome, improvident, and, alas! often drank to excess. But his engaging manners had won the fancy of Bessie's mother, a weak, imaginative woman, who fancied she had found at last the heroic destiny she had missed in earlier life—that of rescuing a gifted man from his debasing habits by the spell of her love.

So she married the handsome, reckless artist, and for a month he did not drink a drop. Then his old appetite came on with redoubled fury, and the tears and complaints of his wife were of no avail.

For two years he lived, growing more and more the slave of his appetite, until he fell from his chair and died in a fit of apoplexy.

Bessie was only eighteen when this happened, and Archie was three years her senior, but she seemed much older from her self-dependence and maturity of thought. She cheered, upheld, and encouraged him who at first nearly broke down under the shame.

"It won't do to give way," she said. "We are poor; you must work; you can be a great

artist, if you will. I must take a place in a school. I shall probably begin my duties week after next. We must work together, Archie."

Archie went straight to his studio.

"Bessie was right," he said. "I was a coward to think of giving up."

So the days and weeks and months rolled by. Bessie secured the hoped-for place in a ward school, and Archie's earnings, sometimes more, sometimes less, added to her own, managed to clear up all out-standing debts and keep the little household together.

Meantime all Archie's spare moments were given to a picture, which he hoped might win a place in the art exposition which was to be held a few months later.

To-night the old gloom had settled upon him. But Bessie's soothing words rallied him once more, and his cheerfulness returned—returned, and with it came the thought that had come to him often of late—that of asking Bessie for a nearer relation than the one he now held.

And so he had spoken, and she had answered, and they went on their way as of old, only that perhaps there was a new light in Bessie's eyes and a softer colour on her cheek when she heard Archie's step, and she broke out into little snatches of song now and then and did not tire so easily at her tasks.

At last the time came when Archie's picture was finished. Everybody who saw it was delighted with it. Bessie's heart throbbed to hear its praises.

At the exhibition itself the picture was equally successful, and drew for Archie the gold medal. He came home radiant. Bessie met him in the hall.

It was Saturday and she was not at school. She had been restless and uneasy all day, knowing how greatly Archie would be affected for good or ill by the fate of his picture.

When he came in her heart leaped with emotion, for she saw by his face and knew by his carriage that he had succeeded. She went forward to meet him with a glad cry.

He reached out his arms and drew her close to his heart, and for the first time in their years of association he kissed her lips.

"I am successful," he said, "and I owe it all to you, dear."

Then he let her go, but all of life had been glorified for her in that brief moment.

When she went to her room that night she looked at her reflection in the mirror as fondly as a mother looks upon her child.

"He kissed you," she whispered, "and you must be fair—though you were the plainest face in the world before his kiss would have made you fair and sweet, I know."

And in truth she was very fair that hour; love had lit the grey eyes with sudden glory, and the colour in cheek and lip was like a carnation.

Bessie's mother, a weak, complaining invalid, ever since the death of her husband, now became seriously ill, requiring constant attention, and in this strait Bessie wrote to her mother's only living relative, a sister, a widow, living in a distant city.

"My mother speaks of you constantly," she wrote. "She feels sure she cannot live many months longer, and she wants to see you before she dies. Come, if you can, and remain with us to the end."

The answer came by return mail.

"I WILL come as soon as I can pack my trunks. I was about to close my house and go away for the summer with my daughter, who has been applying herself too closely to her art studies the last year and needs a change. We will come to you and remain as long as my poor sister needs us."

Bessie was delighted at the idea of her cousin's companionship. She had not seen her since the two were children, but remembered she was near her own age, and a very bright, pretty child.

An occasional correspondence had been kept up between the two, often interrupted by an interval of years. Since her second marriage Bessie's mother had requested her daughter not to write to her sister, as she did not want her to

know of her mistake and disgrace for a second time.

"She objected to my marriage with your father, Bessie, because he had nothing but a handsome face to recommend him, and I am sure she would be very much disgusted if she knew what I had done in my maturity. She married for money and always wanted me to. She had no romance or sentiment about her and never understood me."

So Bessie had not written; but now, with the shadow of approaching death upon her, the desire to see her only sister rose strong within her, and she asked that the letter might be written.

A few weeks later they came. The stately mother in widow's weeds—the fair, sweet daughter, who took Bessie to her heart at once, and made her feel that she had found a sister instead of a cousin in her.

Lisle Stanton was an unspoiled child of fortune. She had been the idol of her parents and teachers, and a pet in society. Without being beautiful she was what people called "charming," and her greatest charm lay in her perfectly sweet disposition and rare good breeding, which passed for wonderful simplicity of manners—the first requisite of good breeding.

She had not as classic a cut of feature as Bessie, nor as fine a stature; but she had a rounder contour, a softer bloom, exquisite hands and arms, and that nameless charm that breathes from a happy heart and a loving nature.

She was a fine art scholar, and had made it a speciality. She drew and painted with unusual skill. She was, therefore, in perfect sympathy with Archie, and her enthusiasm over his work lent him renewed life and courage. Often she and Bessie, with others, sometimes Archie's patrons, went to his studio to see some new picture just finished and on exhibition there for the first time.

Bessie's heart leaped with delight as she heard her cousin's appreciative words of praise, after a forenoon spent in Archie's studio.

This girl, with her fine artistic tastes and her enthusiasm was just the friend Archie needed near him to cheer and inspire.

"I know nothing about his art," she said to Lisle, "and he knows I do not, and when he is blue and discouraged and dissatisfied with his work I can only repeat the praises of others, and try and cheer him in a general way. I am so glad you are here, for now he has a footing in the world of artists I want him to go higher. And he is so liable to have a season of gloom, as dark and despairing as his recent hopes have been fair. One extreme follows the other with him. I have been dreading the day when the reaction came—but now you may be able to avert it. Be with him as much as you can, Lisle, and interest him in new ideas. You have no comprehension how terrible his seasons of melancholy are—they are almost insanity; and I think every effort should be made to avert their recurrence, as is done for unfortunate people who suffer from climate fevers or malaria periodically."

Lisle listened, and never for one moment imagined that Bessie was speaking with more than a sister's interest in Archie Andrews; for so, oddly enough or naturally enough, she had associated them in her mind. She had a vague idea that the two had been reared together since childhood and that their interest in each other was very like that of an actual brother and sister.

When one day Archie looked after Bessie as she passed through the room, and with a tremor in his voice said "God bless her—all I am, or may be, I owe to her, Miss Stanton," Lisle thought nothing strange of it. Many a brother said that of a gentle sister's influence.

Lisle had seen a good deal of society, she had always had plenty of attention. But she had never known daily association with any man, save her father, before.

She had her favourites, but she had never seen her ideal. Now that she was released from all conventional restraint, and in almost hourly companionship with a handsome, gifted young

man, whose tastes ran in the same channel as her own, she felt a new emotion growing in her heart.

She was no unsophisticated girl—she was a woman, and she knew what this feeling was. She knew she was growing to love Archie Andrews.

She did not shrink from the knowledge. She believed him to be free, and it did not seem an immodest thing to her to think that he might love her in return.

He was poor, but that did not matter. She was an heiress in her own right, and would be glad to share her wealth with him. So she dreamed her first beautiful love-dream, and the summer days went by.

July came, and with it Bessie's vacation. But her mother required almost all her time now, and Lisle and Archie were left to entertain each other.

Archie was doing fine work, and was more cheerful and entertaining than Bessie had ever known him.

"I am so glad you are here, dear, for Archie's sake, if for no other reason," Bessie said to her one night. "I am so much occupied now, he would be very lonely but for you, and I fear very melancholy. He has not had a 'blue' since you came."

There was no shadow of fear in Bessie's heart. Was not Archie her very own—were they not linked together by every tie, tender and sacred? Had they not suffered together and wept together, and worked and struggled up into the light of hope and love together? And had not Archie taken her in his arms and kissed her and said all that was his he owed to her?

How, then, could she fear another woman's influence—and that one her own loved Lisle—Lisle, who had riches and a world of suitors in her own degree? The thought would have seemed the wildest folly to her. Archie and Lisle were mental companions, counsellors in art, sympathetic friends.

In August Bessie's mother died. Then came the question of the future. Mrs. Stanton and Lisle would return home in a month, and they urged Bessie to go with them. Bessie was too weak and tired to make any plans, and acquiesced to all they said. Yet she wondered a little why Archie did not speak out and tell them he had other plans for her future. It had never occurred to her that he had any intention of allowing her to go away from him.

One day, as autumn drew on, she had been out for several hours, attending to some purchases for her long-neglected wardrobe. She had come in unobserved by anyone, and too tired to go up to her own room she had dropped down upon a lounge in an alcove behind the lace-curtains.

She fell asleep almost as soon as she had touched the lounge. She was awakened awhile after by the sound of Archie's voice. Lisle was seated in front of the fireplace, for there was just chill enough in the air for a little fire. Her work had fallen in her lap, and she was looking down shyly, for Archie was seated beside her eagerly talking to her.

"Lisle, Lisle," he was saying, "what is there in the blood and brain of you that does all this? The touch of your garments—the sound of your voice thrills through every nerve. I could dare such things—defy such things for you; and the lightest quiver of your eyelids were wealth enough to pay for the loss of all the world beside. This yearning, burning hour I would push back the truest heart on earth, undo from mine the patient, helpful hands that have raised me from the very dust, to find your own held out to me, and your lips waiting for my own. Oh, I am mad, mad—but you must save me, Lisle—you must not let me commit so cruel a sin—do so great a wrong!"

There was a moment's terrible silence—terrible to the man whose heart and conscience were at war—terrible to the woman who dimly understood that a barrier lay between her and the man she loved—terrible to the listener in the alcove who knew the dearest hope of her life was gone out in the darkness for ever.

Then Lisle, who had been listening with down-

cast eyes, looked up and spoke, almost with a gasp.

"Do you mean," she began, "do you mean that another—"

Archie hurried to finish the broken sentence. "I mean that I am under bonds to another, Lisle—to the truest woman on heart. There has been no formal engagement, only it has been understood between us for a long time. All I am I owe to her, and I never dreamed that I did not give her the best I had to give until you came. And then—oh! God forgive me—but the thought of making any woman but you my wife, Lisle, is maddening. You have grown to fill my life, my heart, my soul. So great, so mighty, so absorbing a passion must have found a response in your breast, Lisle—but you must help me to be strong. I am going away for a time. Take Bessie home with you; after a few months or a year I will return and fulfil my word of honour. I shall be stronger then."

And Lisle's answer came low, tremulous, yet clear and distinct, as they rose and moved away from the tortured listener and left the room.

"With all my soul and strength I love you, Archie, and with all my soul and strength will I help you to be strong and do right, and God be with both of us."

Bessie, when she found herself alone, crept out into the hall, took her garden-hat from the rack and stole away in the twilight. She felt she must be alone to fight out her battle, and she sought a favourite spot by the river where she often had gone before.

Here she sat down on the bank and with her chin resting on her hand looked out on the fading day.

No one was near. No one was in sight except a solitary boatman already disappearing around a turn in the river. But she saw nothing, not even the sunset that she seemed to be absorbed in.

No wonder! She had come to where we all come some time in our lives—first or last, sooner or later—her Garden of Gethsemane. For

All those who journey, soon or late,
Must pass within the garden's gate—
Must kneel alone in darkness there,
To battle with some fierce despair.

In the morning if she was strangely white and hollow-eyed it was not wondered at. She had been over-worked, her aunt said.

"We will take you home with us, dear, and you shall be nursed back to strength and health in a little while," her aunt said, soothingly.

But Bessie only smiled wearily.

A week later at the tea-table Archie announced his intended departure for Wales.

"You have all made your preparations for departure," he said, "and I have been of what use I can be. Now I want to go prospecting a little, and think I will run away for a month or two. A party of my friends start for Wales in the morning, and will go camping in the mountains. I have promised to accompany them."

After Lisle had gone to her room that night Bessie tapped on her door, and entering she sat down on the side of her cousin's couch.

"Lisle, dear," she began, "I want you to do a painful duty for me."

"Well?" Lisle queried, wondering.

"I want you to take a message for me, if you will, to Archie—"

She hesitated, and then went on, hurriedly:

"Some time ago, when Archie was very depressed and gloomy, he made some sort of a proposal to me. We have always been very dear to each other—very dear. He was so easily depressed or discouraged that I dared not tell him how impossible such a union would be—how how lacking I was in all save a sisterly affection for him. I made some remark that could be easily construed in either way; and the months have gone by. I thought perhaps it was better for him to have some personality, aside from his own, to think and plan for until he reached higher ground. But now he has reached that ground, and seems entirely freed from the old gloom and despondency. Yet it is not a pleasant subject for me to introduce. I want you to make known to him, by word or

GEN

In con-
United S
(taken fr
interesti
Genera
stock. I
descend
some six
York to
County,
19th of
father di

letter, dear, that I desire my freedom, and that he has his. Now that our paths are to separate, I think it should be so. Tell him I love him very tenderly, Lisle, and shall always be the same friend as of old, but now that he is strong enough to stand alone I think the force of our engagement should be done away with. It has been troubling me sorely for many days, this matter has, and I could not decide in my mind how to broach it. Then I thought of you, and resolved to ask you. Will you do this for me, dear?"

There was a strange tremor in Lisle's voice as she promised, and she lay awake to weep happy tears that night after Bessie had left her.

Archie's plans for Wales were abandoned at the eleventh hour.

"Some affairs in the studio hindered," he said, "an order for a picture he could not well leave for a pleasure trip."

A little while later they all went away and left him. As they were parting he took Bessie's hand.

"I want to thank you, dear," he said, "for the help and strength you gave me when it was sorely needed. You were kind and considerate and womanly, and you have been very delicate in giving me my freedom. Since you have never loved me, as I fancied you did at one time, it will not pain you to know that a rare and sweet new love has crept into my heart almost unaware this summer, and that it is not a hopeless one."

"God bless you both," said Bessie, and hurried away.

Once in her aunt's home, where nothing was expected of her, and where she could let her strained nerves relax, she fell into a low, prostrated state, which baffled the skill of the best physicians.

"Nervous prostration"—the words are common enough, but do you know the awful meaning of them? It is a state only one degree removed from insanity—worse, far worse, than the most acute disease, or contagious malady in all the list of human ills.

She was tenderly cared for, and every comfort and luxury was hers. But "a mind diseased no medicine can cure."

In the glad time of the winter holidays the bells rang out the chimes for Lisle's wedding. They went to Italy for the winter and remained through the spring. They had been there just six months when the news came of Bessie's death.

"Nothing seemed to rally her," said Mrs. Stanton, who joined her daughter a few months later. "Her constant care of her mother, together with her duties as a teacher, seemed to have utterly broken down her nervous system. Poor child, she seemed so glad to die. 'I have nothing to live for,' she said, so many times. 'It seemed so strange for one so young, but it was the state her nerves were in that gave her such mental depression, of course.'"

Archie brushed away a tear as he listened.

"Ah! I owe to her," he said, and then he turned to his lovely wife, and added, "But I thank God I was not called upon to make a sacrifice of my life's happiness for her."

And no spirit whispered to him that a life had been sacrificed for his happiness.

GENERAL GARFIELD.

In connection with the recent dastardly attempt on the life of the President of the United States, a brief record of his career (taken from the "Pictorial World") may prove interesting.

General Garfield comes of plain New England stock. His father, Abraham Garfield, a direct descendant of the stalwart Puritans, moved some sixty years ago from the State of New York to the township of Orange, Cuyahoga County, Ohio, where James was born on the 19th of November, 1831. Two years later his father died, leaving a family of four children.

His mother, a woman of unusual strength of character, managed by her exertions to keep the family together until the boys were old enough to earn their own living. But the land was poor, and it was hard work to get more than a scanty subsistence. Young Garfield's life was one of monotonous toil. He worked hard upon the farm in summer, and at the carpenter's bench in winter.

He had an absorbing ambition to get an education, and the only road open to this end seemed that of manual labour. Ready money was hard to get in those days. The Ohio Canal ran not far from where he lived, and finding that the boatmen got their pay in cash, and earned better wages than he could make at farming or carpentry, he hired out as a driver on the tow-path, and soon got up to the dignity of holding the helm of a boat. Then he determined to ship as a sailor on the lakes, but an attack of fever and ague interfered with his plans. He was ill three months, and when he recovered he decided to go to a school called Genuga Academy, in an adjoining county. His mother gave him a few dollars, some cooking utensils, and a stock of provisions. He hired a small room, and cooked his own food, to make his expenses as light as possible. He paid his own way after that, never calling on his mother for any more assistance. By working at the carpenter's bench mornings and evenings and vacation times, and teaching country schools during the winter, he managed to attend the academy during the spring and autumn terms, and to save a little money towards going to college.

When he was twenty-three years old he entered the Junior Class at Williams College. He had saved about half enough money to pay the expenses of the course. A kind-hearted gentleman, many years his senior, who has ever since been one of his closest friends, lent him the amount. So scrupulous was the young man about the payment of the debt that he got his life insured, and placed the policy in his creditor's hands. "If I live," he said, "I shall pay you; if I die, you will suffer no loss." The debt was repaid soon after he graduated. He went to Williams College in the autumn of 1853, and, as he had anticipated, passed the examination for the Junior Class. Two years later he graduated, and bore off the metaphysical honour.

Before he went to college, young Garfield had been connected with the Western sect of "The Disciples," founded by Alexander Campbell, and whose peculiar tenets were, "no creed to express beliefs," hospitality, fraternity, and goodwill. To a struggling college of this sect at Hiram, Portage County, Ohio, Garfield was called as an instructor, and after two years he became President. It has often been said that he was at one time a minister. This is not true. The story had a foundation, however, in the fact that he used to speak in the churches of the denomination. The Disciples at that time had no regular paid ministry. They supported travelling elders, but the congregations had no pastors, and were usually addressed by some one among the members who had a natural talent for pulpit oratory. Garfield's purpose was to be a lawyer, and he had not swerved from it at the time he used to talk of religion and a future life to the little congregations in the Disciples' meeting-houses in Northern Ohio. He studied law diligently all the while, and was an ardent reader of general literature.

During his connection with the college he was married to Miss Lucretia Rudolph, the daughter of a farmer. The match was one of love, and brought to the young man a mate of singular sweetness and congeniality of disposition, whose influence, example, and companionship have done much to shape his after success.

In 1859 his career as College President became merged in that of civic officer, and he was chosen the State Senator, representing the two counties of Portage and Summit. Then came the stirring events of the war. Senator Garfield had already been singled out as a leader, and he entered the conflict with all the enthusiasm of an ardent Republican, a lover of the Union, and a hater of slavery. His military career was

full of brave deeds and arduous service for his country. He went into the war as Colonel of the 42nd Ohio Volunteers. He first smelled powder in Kentucky, where, after a toilsome march, he routed the rebels under Humphrey Marshall. Then the Colonel became a Brigadier-General, and took part in the battle of Pittsburg Landing and the siege of Corinth as Chief of Staff of the Army of the Cumberland. In the terrible battle of Chickamauga he had a horse shot under him, and his orderly was killed. Soon afterwards, "for gallant and meritorious services," he was promoted to a Major-Generalship.

Before the battle of Chickamauga he had been elected a Representative of the thirty-eighth Congress. He took his seat in December, 1863, and was assigned to the Committee on Military Affairs. He was re-elected successively to the thirty-ninth, fortieth, forty-first, forty-second, forty-third, forty-fourth, forty-fifth, and forty-sixth Congresses. During these several terms he has served as the Chairman of the Committee on Military Affairs, of the Committee on Banking and Currency, and of the Appropriations Committee. This last chairmanship he held until 1875, when the Democrats came into power. Two years later, when James G. Blaine went to the Senate, General Garfield became by common consent the Republican leader in the House—a position which he has maintained ever since. In January last he was elected to the Senate, to fill the seat of Allen G. Thurman, who retires on the 4th of March next. He received the unanimous vote of the Republican caucus for his position, an honour never conferred before on any man by any party in Ohio.

DR. CUMMING.

The death of this well-known preacher and writer on topics of controversial theology took place on the 5th ult. at Chiswick in his seventy-first year. He retired, not long since, on account of failing health, from the ministry of the National Scotch Church in Crown Court, Drury Lane, which he had held since 1833.

The Rev. John Cumming, D.D., was a native of Aberdeen, and studied at the University there. He came to London in 1832, and was chosen minister of the Scotch Church in the same year. He soon distinguished himself as a platform orator by his decided opposition to the doctrines of the Roman Catholic Church, and he continued during many years to address large meetings all over the country, under the auspices of "the Reformation Society."

Dr. Cumming was the author of some devotional and controversial works, as well as a popular preacher. He preached before her Majesty on more than one occasion. Once, at Balmoral, he delivered a sermon which was afterwards published under the title of "Salvation;" and in the autumn of 1872 he preached before her Majesty, at Dunrobin, on "Communion between Heaven and Earth." This sermon has also been published.

Among Dr. Cumming's best-known works are "Apocalyptic Sketches," "Daily Life," and "Voices of the Night." He also published "The Great Tribulation," "Redemption Draweth Nigh," and "The Destiny of Nations; or, the Future of Europe as Delineated in the Bible." In these works great events were predicted for the year 1868; and in "The Seventh Vial," published in 1870, he quotes evidence from reliable sources of the fulfilment of all the events predicted in the books of Scripture prophecy.

Dr. Cumming built some large schools in Little Russell Street, in connection with the Scotch Church. He married, in 1833, Miss Elizabeth Nicholson, eldest daughter of Mr. James Nicholson.

The weight of the heart is from eight to twelve ounces. It beats 100,000 times in twenty-four hours.



[IMPULSIVE LOVE.]

A BRAVE GIRL.

A SHORT STORY.

(COMPLETE IN THIS NUMBER.)

"LEON, there will be considerable work to do to-morrow; five hundred volunteers leave Havana, in disguise, to meet at a rendezvous without the city; they are to proceed toward Santiago to join the general and his forces in the mountains. I received despatches to-day, apprising me of a terrific battle, and the general wrote me he needed more troops at once, as he is hard pressed."

"Well, Don Valentin?" said Leon Francisco, after a pause.

"You, Leon," continued Don Valentin Garcia, "are a member of our confraternity, and as most all our men have been of service but you, I, as chief of our society, purpose giving you command of these volunteers, as you know the overland route from here to Santiago."

The handsome young Cuban's face paled, and he glanced quickly across the room in which he sat with the white-haired old don at a beautiful young girl, who sat by one of the open, iron-barred windows, listening to what the two men said.

Don Valentin did not perceive the young man's

action, as the room was unilluminated, save for a few beams of the rising tropical moon, that fell through the window on the girl.

"I will accept the commission, Don Valentin," said Leon, after a pause, in which time he mastered his emotions. "When am I to depart?"

"At six o'clock to-morrow afternoon."

"Very well; I will be ready."

"I will not give you your orders till you are ready to start," said Don Valentin, "and I am glad you accept the commission, for I place implicit confidence in you, Leon."

"Thank you, senior; you will find that your trust has not been misplaced," replied Leon.

"The men will be well mounted and equipped for the journey," said the old don, "and you will set off immediately after leaving me. I will accompany you to the place of meeting, then return to the city to attend a meeting at the lodge of 'Los Tigres.'"

"Where shall we meet the men?"

"Under the only remaining wall of the ruined monastery," replied Don Valentin.

The young man bowed his head acquiescingly, and his host resumed a cigarette he had been smoking. As they concluded speaking, Juanita, the old don's daughter, started slightly and glanced through the window. She had observed the shadowy form of a man who had glided noiselessly from behind a huge tree that grew near the house. He disappeared from view an instant

later, and thinking he was simply a passer-by she gave no further heed to him.

A negro brought in some wine a few moments later, and while Don Valentin and Leon were drinking to the success of the purposed expedition another black entered, and handed Don Valentin a card. The old Cuban read the name inscribed on it, and rising hastily, excused himself and left the room. When he had gone, Leon rose to his feet and approached Juanita. On reaching her side, he was surprised at finding her weeping bitterly.

"Senorita Garcia," he said, anxiously, as he bent over her, "what is the matter? Why are you weeping?"

"Oh, Leon, dearest Leon, it is at what was just said!" she sobbed.

"Juanita!" he cried, clasping her hands in his own, and looking tenderly down into her lustrous brown eyes. "Is it possible that your heart is saddened at the prospect of parting with me? Tell me, Juanita, my darling, is the love I have for you reciprocated? Can I dare to call you my own? Answer—oh, answer me affirmatively, and I can leave Havana on the morrow to face a thousand perils with the blissful consciousness that my tenderest aspiration is granted!"

Her white arms stole around his neck, and he strained her to his breast with passionate fervor, while he rained a shower of tender kisses on her soft, delicate cheeks.

As they stood thus the door opened and Don Valentin and a man entered the room. The latter personage was tall, dark-complexioned, and wore a black beard. A dark scowl of intense hatred and rage crossed his swarthy brow when his black eyes rested on the lovers. When Leon was made aware of the intrusion he released Juanita and faced them. Don Valentin's face wore a smile of satisfaction.

"Senor Francisco," he said, "this is Senor Roman Vasquez."

"We have met before," interjected Leon, bowing coldly.

Vasquez belonged to "Los Tigres," a secret organisation for the assistance of the Cuban insurgents, who were at that period resisting the forces from Spain in the endeavour to retain their freedom. Don Valentin was the chief of the lodge in Havana, and thus Vasquez, having met Juanita, had fallen desperately in love with her. She rejected his court, as she preferred Leon, and there was now little or no chance for friendship to exist between them.

Vasquez learned that he was to accompany his rival in the rank of lieutenant.

The next day at six o'clock the young men joined the soldiers at the place of appointment, and assuming command, they received orders how to proceed, and then the cavalcade put spurs to their horses and set off at a gallop. Don Valentin watched them until they disappeared, then turned his horse's head homeward. He had not gone far, however, when in passing through a slight growth of timber a company of Spanish soldiers filed out in his path, and the officer in command ordered him to halt at once and surrender.

One quick glance sufficed to show him the situation. Evidently a traitor had betrayed him to the Spanish authorities, then in possession of Havana, and they had sent the soldiers to capture him. His parting with the insurgents proved beyond doubt his allegiance to Cuba.

He glanced keenly at the armed soldiers, debating in his mind his chances to cope with them; then suddenly drawing a revolver from his pocket he fired at the officer who held his horse's bridle. The shot was terribly effective, and before the astonished soldiers could rally from the shock of this unexpected turn of events he plunged spurs in his horse's flanks and dashed away, soon being out of their view.

Meanwhile, Juanita sat thinking of her lover in the room where he declared his passion for her. So occupied was she, indeed, with her thoughts that the time passed rapidly, and it was midnight ere she was aware of it. But her reflections were interrupted rather abruptly by a servant ushering in what appeared to be a woman, then retiring. But she was undecieved presently by her visitor lifting a veil and disclosing the

features of her father. He bade her keep silent, and then in a whisper detailed all that had occurred to him from the time he had parted from Leon.

"I evaded the soldiers, and, reaching the city, procured this disguise at a friend's house," he added. "We must leave Havana at once, for indubitably this house will be placed under surveillance, and should they capture me I shall surely be shot, and your fate—"

He shuddered.

A short time later two persons in feminine apparel left the house, and, entering a carriage, were driven away.

"It is a terribly stormy night, padre! Just hear the surf break and roar beneath the cliffs upon the shore."

"Ay, my child, and I fear, I fear—"

"Oh, padre, you think the soldiers coming from the mountains will pass along the shore, and the tide so rapidly rising will endanger their lives," cried the young girl, anxiously, as she looked up at the old priest.

"No doubt of it," he replied; "they are tired and weary from their tedious tramp to the Cabo de Cruz from Pinales; and, beside, I learned from the messenger they sent ahead to-night that they are pursued by the Spaniards. Dios grant they may reach the village in safety."

They stood at the door of one of the cottages that comprised the tiny fisher village built on the top of the rugged cliff, and as her father with whom she dwelt was absent the girl was glad of the stout old priest's company. The night was dark and tempestuous, the rain pouring down from the murky clouds, thunder muttering and crashing with fierce reverberations, while anon the sky was rent by vivid flashes of lightning. Below the beetling cliff the waves dashed on the narrow shore furiously, and were churned to foam on the out-lying reefs.

"Father," said the young girl, after a pause, "do you think the soldiers will come up through the rift in the cliff to the top? Do they know of the path, think you?"

"No, my child," replied the good priest, anxiously; "in truth, that is just what causes me worry—the messenger said that they will come by the beach path."

"Father—oh, father! Should that devoted band of gallant men, fatigued by their long journey, attempt to come here by means of the beach, the waves will carry them away and all will inevitably perish! Oh, how can we save them?"

"No one can help them," returned the priest, sadly, "for not a man would venture down on the beach to guide them."

"But it will be fearful to leave those brave soldiers to walk blindly to their doom! Ha! see—a beacon fire has just been lit on the cliff to guide them—and look—look! Headed by papa, the villagers are dragging the old signal gun from its shed—ah, they are loading it now!"

"I fear their preparations will not avail, child," said the kind old priest, mournfully, shaking his grey head.

"Then," said the girl, drawing her shawl up over her head, "I will try to prevail upon one of the men to go to their assistance."

And so saying she sped rapidly from the cottage, out onto the bleak, barren cliff, to where a number of men stood near a large fire.

"Of what avail this fire, men?" she cried, when she was in their midst. "Think you, my friends, that those we expect here—all warriors for their country's freedom, and who are pursued by a legion of fiends thirsty for their blood—will see this beacon? No—no! For yonder, in the gloom-shrouded heavens, the blazing lightning can hardly pierce the sombre mist, let alone this insignificant fire! Somebody must go down on the seashore and guide them up through the rift. Who will go?"

"Caramba!" exclaimed her father, in a tone of anger. "Return to the house at once, girl!"

"Men," she continued, ignoring her parent's rebuke, "will not one of you go to the rescue of those faithful men, who have shed their life's

blood for you and yours—go and save the bitter tears of those who await their return home anxiously—oh, so anxiously?"

"It would be madness to rush to our doom so recklessly," said one of the men, and the others shrank back in fear.

She regarded the frightened men scornfully a moment, then suddenly threw up her head with an imperative gesture.

"Hark!" she cried, breathlessly.

There came through the mist the distant boom of a gun.

"They are coming—they are coming!" she cried, as another faint, distant report broke the intense stillness. "They signal for assistance, and you—one of you, who professes the name of man, hesitate to risk your single life for the salvation of half a thousand! For shame! But—but—forgive me—some of you have families to care for; I will go!"

There was a cry of horror; they started forward to restrain her; but she glided away like a phantom in the darkness, and was soon beyond their sight. Her father uttered a groan of agony, and would have pursued her, had not the priest detained him forcibly. One of the men discharged the gun, and the report had hardly died away when there came a distant, muffled answer. They then awaited the brave girl's return in deep tribulation and with pale faces, for they well knew the dangerous path that she must traverse.

A sudden silence reigned a few minutes, as if the very elements were sympathetic. The brave, weather-beaten fishermen trembled for her safety—death seemed to be in the air—the wind shrieking around the crag like the unearthly cries of a host of arch-fiends, and the sullen, hoarse roar of the crashing surf below on the beach seemed to echo in horrid, exulting tones the wild port of the spray-laden blasts. Then, hark! "Boom!" Another muffled report, and the listening men knew from the reverberation that it is nearer than the previous discharge. An answering boom roared out on the cliff top, and the men tossed more dry faggots on the fire. They waited, terror-stricken, and anxious again, presenting a wild, weird picture, standing there exposed to the intense fury of the darting, vivid lightning and the drenching rain.

A few minutes passed slowly by, each second seeming as an hour; then suddenly they heard the tramp of many feet, the murmur of distant voices, and discerned the faint glow of a light in the dark. Then, almost instantaneous with a wild, glad cheer that broke from the men, there walked into the village a regiment of soldiers, headed by their commander, at whose side walked the brave girl.

Cheer after cheer broke from the lips of the fishermen as the young girl, with flying hair and drenched clothing, flew to her father's embrace.

"My child!" murmured the old man, brokenly, as he rained kiss after kiss on his noble daughter's face. "Oh, my brave child, I thank God that you are returned safe to my arms again! You cannot imagine my agony when you left me to start on your wild mission."

"Papa dear," replied the girl, gently, as she raised her hand toward the black, murky heavens, "it was God who guided me in the darkness—it was He who directed my faltering footsteps over the dangerous road and brought me safely to the beach in time to rescue that band of poor, fatigued soldiers. I looked to the dark, forbidding sky, I heard the roar of the maddened waves echoed by the mighty bursts of awful thunder, and the blazing lightning flashed with vivid, forked tongues across my vision; but, exposed to all this, that heavenward glance reassured me, and you perceive the omnipotent grace of God in protecting me thus."

The old man bowed his head, and a moment later the aged priest approached and blessed her with a fervent prayer of thanksgiving. A silence fell on the trio then, which was broken presently by a man's voice.

"Is this courageous girl your daughter, señor?"

The old father turned and beheld the com-

mander of the rescued regiment standing at his elbow.

"She is, señor," he replied, tremulously. "But Heaven knows I nearly lost her for your salvation."

The soldier gazed at the girl earnestly a moment, the light of the beacon fire falling on her features; then suddenly he started towards her with outstretched arms; she saw his action, a glad cry escaped her lips, and she sprang into his embrace.

"Juanita Garcia!" exclaimed the soldier.

"Oh, Leon, Leon, is it indeed you? Do I dream—is this a mad fancy, or am I really awake?"

"Thank God! Oh, thank God!" he murmured, tremulously, as he drew her close in his impassioned embrace, and pressed hot, loving kisses on her lips, gazing erstwhile with tender solicitude down into her beautiful eyes. "It is indeed myself in the flesh and blood, darling, the happiest mortal in existence, being blest by thine own lovely self. Ah, Don Valentin, my old friend—what! white-haired and bent? This is pleasure admixed with sorrow!"

"Leon Francisco!" was all the old man could say; and he tearfully embraced the young soldier.

A few minutes later Leon left them to see if his gallant band of weary soldiers were well quartered, and finding them all comfortable he posted a few soldiers on guard near the beacon fire, with strict injunctions to apprise him of the approach of any great number of soldiers who might come that way; then he returned to Don Valentin Garcia's cottage. Here he was served with a good, substantial supper, of which he stood much in need, and when he finished eating he sat near his host and Juanita to recite all that had happened to him since last he saw them. But Leon insisted upon hearing the old don's story first, and Garcia complied with his request. He first told what had occurred from the time he parted with Leon outside the walls of Havana to the time of his departure from home, accompanied by his daughter, and then continued: They had travelled day and night eastward in disguise, and reaching the Cabo de Cruz by the merest accident, had found the tiny village where they were then, and learning that its humble inhabitants were all loyal Cubans they resolved to remain there. And there they had resided two years in obscurity and safety.

"Caramba! A pitiful experience, I confess!" exclaimed Leon, at the conclusion of Don Valentin's narrative. "And now for my story: Had not my darling Juanita so bravely gone down the cliff to the beach to the rescue of my gallant little band this night, we should all have inevitably perished. All day we had been pursued by a large band of Spanish troops, and had evaded them until reaching the seashore, when they again perceived and followed us. We were in dire distress, as all my men were much fatigued by their long forced march, and to increase our misery we perceived that the tide was rising rapidly with the coming storm, which is now raging so fiercely without. The beach was narrow, and the in-rolling breakers forced us near and nearer the base of the cliffs, while behind us pursued the legion of one thousand Spanish troops, thirsting for our bondage or our blood. We sent a messenger ahead to look for some shelter, and I learned he reached this village. We could not hope to cope with our enemies, as they outnumbered us, and so tried to find some means of evading them. At all events there was only one chance for us, and that was to leave the beach if possible. But how to do this? The sea, angry and turbulent, hemmed us in on one side, and the beetling cliffs on the other, an intense darkness ahead, and our enemy behind! That was a critical position, and it is no wonder that I felt despairing. It was at the moment of my bitterest despair that like an angel of mercy from heaven Juanita appeared in our midst. I did not recognise her in the darkness. She led us up a path through a rift in the cliff, and our enemies, headed by Roman Vasquez, passed by us in the darkness, ignorant of our escape."

"Roman Vasquez" cried Don Valentin, in great surprise.

"Ay. He deserted my ranks soon after my cavalcade left Havana and disappeared. When next I met him, a month later, it was in battle, and he commanded a large Spanish force. Evidently he was a traitor from the first, and the very man who betrayed you to the Spanish government. I think he loved Juanita, and his treachery was instigated by the thought of gaining her hand in marriage without your or my opposition; for if you were dead and I buried in the wilderness—surrounded by dangers untold, from which there would be little chance to escape—it would have been easy for him to return to Havana, and his way being clear of obstacles, press his attention to your daughter."

"You are right, Leon," said Don Valentin, after a pause, in which time he had been thinking deeply; "and, Leon," he added, "think you he and his band will escape the danger menacing them on the seashore? There is no other path to the cliff tops than that by which you and your men came."

"Their fate is in the hands of God," replied Leon, in a low, hushed tone.

He had little hope for their salvation from death. And, indeed, the next morning when the storm passed away, the fishermen brought news of a terrible disaster. They had found the beach strewn with bodies, mangled and bleeding, some dead, others nearly so. Among the latter they carried to Don Valentin's cottage the expiring form of Roman Vasquez. The old priest was there, and prayed earnestly and fervently for his blackened soul, but the beast—the thing of clay, devoid of soul—cursed the good padre, and with his vile maledictions drove the good man horrified from the bedside.

However, as grim death began spreading its sombre mantle about him, Vasquez, like all men of his stamp, in awful agony and horror implored the priest's prayers, and they were readily uttered. Before called to his final rest the relenting wretch made a confession to the priest which was simply a corroboration of what Don Valentin and Leon surmised, as is recorded above.

Several days later Leon and Juanita were by mutual consent married; but a few days after the ceremony the young soldier and his gallant band left the village. It would be useless to describe the young wife's grief; but Leon was a born soldier, and, panting for his country's freedom, he determined to aid groaning Cuba to his utmost. When, after several years' hard fighting, he fled from his native isle with his wife and Don Valentin, it was with the despairing thought that there was no hope for liberty. But he found a safe haven on England's hospitable shores, and has since resided here happily.

FACETIÆ.

SHUT UP!

"You're very bald, sir. Have you tried our tonic lotion?"

"Oh, yea. But that's not what's made all my hair fall off." Punch.

ORTONIAN.—A new Tichborne Claimant en route. It is said he can speak and write French perfectly. "Ah!" says Mrs. Gamp, "we shall soon 'ave another nobleman languishing in prison." Punch.

AN IRISH QUITTANCE.—A tenant farmer's rent is due at midsummer, and he pays his shot. Punch.

PRESENCE OF MIND.

VISITOR (in cathedral town, desirous of information and willing to pay for it, to respectable-looking party, whom he takes to be a verger): "I suppose now these cloisters"—(slips florin into his hand)—"are not older than the sixteenth century?"

RESPECTABLE PARTY: "Well, sir, I'm sure

I"—(pockets the coin)—"thanky, sir—can't say, sir; 'cause I'm a stranger 'ere myself." [Exit hastily. Tableau.] Punch.

A NOTE AND COMMENT.

MRS. RAMSBOTHAM'S niece read out the advertisement of Doré's picture, "Moses before Pharaoh." "Dear me!" exclaimed the dear old lady, "Before Pharaoh! I always thought they lived at the same time. But," she added, after a moment's reflection, "I daresay it's been altered in the Revised Version." Punch.

NEW TITLE FOR HER GRACIOUS MAJESTY.—The Saturday Reviewer. Punch.

KING KALAKAU went to see Harrow thrash Eton last week. It rained now and then, but King Kalakau is printed in fast colours, and we are pleased to say his pattern didn't run. They have eaten boys in the Sandwich Islands, sometimes, and we will not dwell on the disappointment in the royal face when the difference in spelling was explained; but someone brought a good-sized chicken and all was well.

Moonshine.

THE WYE AND THE WHEREFORE.

RIVER! most ex-stream-ly high
Are your waters. Tell me Wye!
Wye on earth?—but then, oh, Wye!
You will be most ex-stream-ly dry.

Moonshine.

IN THE WILDS OF BEDFORDSHIRE.—A FACT.

LADY (visitor to village) to rustic: "And whose is the large house over there?"

RUSTIC: "Oh, that be Muster Stoneham's. Ah, you'll be knowin' him, miss? You're from Lunnun, ain't ee?"

LADY: "Yes, but I don't know Mr. Stoneham."

RUSTIC: "Not know un? That be strange! Yet he live in Lunnun too." Moonshine.

MARY ANN (to whom mistress has pointed out the phenomenon): "Lor, mum! So that's a comic. I seed it two or three nights ago, but I only thought it was something the matter with one of the stars!" Moonshine.

AT A PROMENADE CONCERT.

WAITER: "Any orders, sir?"

SWELL: "Yes, fresh air for two?"

Moonshine.

KID (c)LOVES.—Babies.

Moonshine.

STRANGE IMPERTINENCE.

PASTOR: "Yes, Mrs. Brown. Taking into consideration the fact that the Smiths hardly ever pay their pew rents, it is strangely bad taste on their part to sing so loudly and throw such unctious into their prayers."

Mrs. BROWN: "Quite too terribly shocking." Fun.

A "COOL" OFFICIAL.—An ice-berg-omaster.

Fun.

A LIBEL!

WHEN a man marries a woman, which is the cheaper, the bride or the bridegroom?—The bride, because she is given away; but the bridegroom is sold. Fun.

THE READING PARTY.

AGNES: "And you are here, then, studying for your examination?"

CHARLES: "Yaas; down with a tutor, don't you know. Working awfully hard. What with bathing in the morning, and a walk and boating in the afternoon, and billiards and dinner and a quiet game of 'Nap,' we've hardly got a minute we can call our own." Fun.

KNOWLEDGE IS POWER.—A man who manages to run in debt must be "an owing" man. Fun.

TRAGIC "COMET."

COMETS were formerly supposed to bring wars. A "comet" apparition in the heavens was considered, that is, to prevent anything of an international "comity" on earth. Fun.

RE-ARRANGED ALIC: FOR THE HOT WEATHER.—Grin and (polar) bear it. Fun.

HINE ILLE LACHRIMÆ.—A lady cannot be drunk unless she is dissolved in tears. Fun.

WHEN is a boat like a knife? When it is a cutter.

"The only lady that ever impressed me much," said an old bachelor, "was a three-hundred-pound woman, who was standing in a tram-car when it turned a sharp corner."

WANTED TO KNOW.

It is a well-known geographical fact that the world is round; how on earth, then, can it come to an end?

Would it be quite in accordance with the "eternal fitness of things" to describe a thief who has just had the "cat" as a "man of mark"?

Is it expected of a field officer, say a kernal, to wear a shell-jacket?

Would it be appropriate, in speaking about a man who had been the victim of a railway accident, to talk in broken English? Judy.

STRANGE.

It is a very extraordinary fact that, although very many much-married people always go to bed quarrelling, yet they never fall out. Judy.

THE ABOLITION OF PETTICOATS.

Oh, woman! since the days of Eve
A bone of hot contention,
Another madcap freak of thine
Attracts the world's attention.

(Alas! I think they've worn them long—
Oh, what a sorry fiction

It is to call the marriage state
A state of Benedic-tion.)

We heard you'd Girted Colleges,
Rejected love for learning;
But that they'd girt-on trouser-legs
Was far beyond discerning.

I see the "march of future years,"
The ladies stride in breeches,
The men have 't'en to petticoats,
And as they run their stitches,

They oft lament "the good old times,"
Ere ladies made the vow, sirs,
No more to mince in petticoats,
But "steal a march" in trousers. Judy.

ANAGRAMMATIC PARADOX.

(Hedozone is ozoned—eh?)

A drink unknown now in no zone.

One knows ozone's in Hedozone;

Though he disown this, he does own

In hedozone that he'd ozone. Judy.

THE boy who will ride about all day on a velocipede considers himself terribly imposed upon if he has to wheel his baby sister bare streets.

SHE cooed; he wooed; the old man said they could if they would. No cards.

BY A LADY'S-MAID.

WHY are divorced couples like a pair of eyebrows?—Because they look strange when they meet. Funny Folks.

POORE FOR GRAMMARIANS.—To compute a sentence. Funny Folks.

SUPERIOR MILE-SIANS.—The Irish Land League-ra. Funny Folks.

A "HOLLOW" BOND OF FRIENDSHIP.—The Channel Tunnel. Funny Folks.

RAILWAY REVOLUTION.

(And all effected by a single recent occurrence.)

GUARD: "Smoking First? Yes, sir. Nice crowded compartment, sir. Seven gents in it, and all booked through."

[Receives handsome "tip" from grateful traveller.] Funny Folks.

AN ELECTRIC LIGHT-HOUSE.—The House of Commons. Funny Folks.

SIMPLE CLASSIFICATION OF WOMAN.—The coy and decoy. Funny Folks.

GEMS.

True merit is like a river, the deeper it is the less noise it makes.

SPARE moments are the gold dust of time.

A MAN acquires more glory by defending than by abusing others.

AN envious man repines at his neighbour's life as much as though he supported him.

No man is always wrong. A clock that does not go at all is right twice in the twenty-four hours.

IGNORANCE and conceit are two of the worst qualities to combat. It is easier to dispute with a statesman than a blockhead.

THE true way to mourn the dead is to take care of the living who belong to them. These are the pictures and statues of departed friends which we ought to cultivate.

If you hate your enemies, you will contract such a vicious habit of mind as by degrees will break out upon those who are your friends or those who are not indifferent to you.

A BAD wife is a shackle on her husband's feet, a burden on his shoulder, a palsy to his hands, vinegar to his teeth, smoke to his eyes, a thorn to his side, a dagger to his heart.

LIFE is like a theatre in this respect—that although during the performance we hold higher and lower places, we all mix in one common stream when the play is over and we go home.

STATISTICS.

THE amount of duty charged on the bushels of malt consumed in England for the nine months ending September 30, 1880, was £4,458,416 17s. 2½d., and the amount of beer duty charged for the three months ending December 31, 1880, was £2,299,635 7s. 4d.

THE result of the census in Ireland for 1881 has been published as a Parliamentary paper. The total population numbers 5,159,339, being a decrease as compared with the previous decennial period of 252,533. The Roman Catholics number 3,951,883 of the total population.

PAPER PRODUCE.—It is estimated that nearly 2,000,000,000 pounds of paper are produced annually; one-half of which is used for printing, a sixth for writing, and the remainder is coarse paper for packing and other purposes. The United States alone produces yearly 200,000 tons of paper, averaging 17 pounds per head for its population. The Englishman comes next with about 12 pounds per head; the educated German takes 8 pounds, the Frenchman 7 pounds; whilst the Italian, Spaniard, and Russian take respectively 3 pounds, 1½ pounds, and 1 pound annually, the consumption of paper being roughly in proportion to the education and the intellectual and political activity of the people.

HOUSEHOLD TREASURES.

POTATO CAKES FOR BREAKFAST.—Save from dinner a scrap plate of mashed potatoes, add to it half a teaspoonful of pepper, the same of nutmeg, a little salt, and the yolk of an egg; form into small cakes, put in a buttered baking-pan, brush the top with the white of an egg, and brown in a quick oven.

STEWED MUTTON CUTLETS.—Three pounds of mutton cutlets, two tablespoonfuls of butter, two raw tomatoes (chopped), pepper and salt, one-half cup of boiling water, browned flour, and currant jelly. Put the butter into a saucepan, and lay in the cutlets, then the tomatoes, set where they will heat very slowly for one hour, then turn the meat, add the boiling water, and stew steadily—not fast—half an hour, keeping the pan closely covered. Lay the cutlets upon a hot dish, strain the gravy back into the

saucepan, thicken with a little browned flour, stir in a heaping teaspoonful of currant jelly, and when this has melted pour over the meat.

CLARET CUP.—Put into a bowl, three bottles of soda-water, and one bottle of claret. Pare a lemon very thin, and grate a nutmeg; add to these, in a jug, one pound of loaf-sugar, and pour over them one pint of boiling water; when cold, strain, and mix with the wine and soda-water; a little lemon juice may be added.

"YOU MIGHT HAVE GUESSED."

He was duller than most men, maybe,

And knew not the subtle signs

By which the heart of the lover

The heart of the maid divines;

And so, distrustful and doubting,

He murmured oft at his lot,

And said: "Of a truth, I love her!

Oh! why does she love me not?"

He marvelled much at her coldness,

For she was a timid thing;

And, like a bird, at his boldness

Would surely have taken wing.

And yet by her wondrous power

She held him her loyal slave,

Delighted to have her friendship,

Content with the least she gave.

And hoping his fond devotion,

The proofs of affection brought,

Would win the heart of the maiden

Whose love was the prize he sought,

More eager to gain possession

Because the dear maid was coy,

He sighed o'er his disappointments,

And grieved like a love-sick boy.

At last, in a daring moment,

When with her he lingered late,

He ventured to put the question,

Determined to know his fate:

"My darling, to make you happy,"

He said, "I'll devote my life;

Ah, can you not learn to love me?

And will you not be my wife?

"Not learn to love you!" she whispered,

Her eyes full of happy tears;

"I thought that you knew it, Charley—

I've loved you these many years!"

The frown from his face departed;

His arms were about her waist;

And sweetest of lover's kisses

He took from her lips so chaste.

"Why didn't you tell me, darling?"

He said, by way of reproof;

"Nor trouble and vex me sorely

By keeping yourself aloof?"

"Though never by word or action,"

She said, "was my love confessed,

Ah, had you been wiser, Charley,

My secret you might have guessed!"

J. P.

MISCELLANEOUS.

THE "METAL WORLD."—We have received the second monthly part of the "Metal World," a new technical journal devoted to the interests of engineers, metal workers, plumbers, wire-workers, etc.—indeed of everyone interested in the world of metal. The "Metal World" seems admirably adapted to fulfil its mission. It is copiously illustrated and contains practical articles and a large amount of useful and interesting information. Mainly addressed to the working classes, its price—one penny weekly—is within the reach of all. The publishers are Messrs. Roberts & Co., 42, Essex Street, Strand, London, W.C.

THE Admiralty have made a grant of an additional £17,000 to the wages account of

Portsmouth Dockyard, whereby the customary discharge of labourers and skilled workmen at the end of the year will be prevented. The necessity for the special grant at the present time is the urgency which exists for an extensive overhaul and refit of the Indian troopships, upon which it is proposed to expend no less a sum than from £60,000 to £65,000.

THE strength of the navy will be increased this year by two corvettes of the Comus class, the Canada and the Cordelia, both of which are under construction at Portsmouth. The former will be launched on August 26 and the latter about the same date in October.

THE other day a little child, barely two years of age, daughter of Mr. Thomas Simpson, carpenter, High Street, Kenilworth, died from the effects of drinking scalding tea from a cup which had been left on the table.

A CURE for hydrophobia is reported to have been found in a plant found in Tonquin—the noang-nan. It is a poison something like strychnine, and the patient's organisation thus becomes the battle-ground between poison and virus.

THE wife of Bernard Lennox, farmer, Curlyhill, Strabane, was recently safely delivered of four sons at a birth. The mother and infants are doing well, and the latter appear to be quite healthy.

A TELEGRAM from Cincinnati recently stated that owing to the great heat there all business was suspended. On Tuesday, the 12th ult., there were ninety-nine cases of sunstroke and forty deaths. Many persons dropped dead in the streets. During the week ending July 16 no less than 414 deaths occurred from the intense heat.

A BALLOON Garden Party took place at Lillie Bridge Grounds on the 30th ult., at the instance of the Balloon Society of Great Britain.

THE annual cricket match between Eton and Harrow terminated in favour of the latter by 112 runs.

THE number of deaths in the world in one day is nearly 83,000.

THE AEROPLANE.—The new air navigating ship is to start from San Francisco on the 2nd August. We may look out for it in England about the 9th and perhaps keep on looking out.

A MONSTER petition, measuring 250 yards, and signed by 20,119 of the inhabitants of Bradford, including nearly all the principal merchants and manufacturers, has been sent for presentation to the House of Commons, praying that no new French treaty be concluded that does not contain a stipulation enabling Great Britain to withdraw from the same after one year's notice, nor until the public has had an opportunity of considering its provisions.

THE Fijian name for a doctor, on being translated, turns out to be "carpenter of death." Dr. Macgregor, who is practising the healing art in that part of the world, has substituted a new term, signifying "man of life;" though how far it has superseded the original is not known.

THE King of Spain is expected to visit England this year.

At the exhibition now being held in Japan an interesting feature is the successful use of paper-belted in the machinery-hall. The Japanese have long been celebrated for their manufacture of some exceedingly tough descriptions of paper, and it is stated that the paper-belted has been tested and found much stronger than ordinary leather.

THEY say that the visit to Europe of King Kalakau, sovereign of the Sandwich Islands, is due to the singular idea of staying the rapid decrease of the populations of his dominions by the infusion of European blood. For this purpose the Latin and Saxon races will have the preference. Great advantages are offered to young men from England, France, or Germany who will consent to settle in the islands and marry wives of the Papuan races. A liberal grant of land, authority in the district in which they may choose to reside, and even a high position at Court, will be offered to those adventurous youths willing to go.

CONTENTS.

Page	Page
TRUE TILL DEATH; OR, A FAILURE OF JUSTICE ... 313	POETRY... 335
HIS BITTER FOX OR, A STRUGGLE FOR A HEART ... 317	MISCELLANEOUS... 335
OUR COLUMBES FOR THE CERESUS ... 320	CORRESPONDENCE ... 336
LINK BY LINK ... 321	
THE MYSTERIOUS DIS- APPEARANCE OF HELEN HARGRAVES (A NOVELLETTE) ... 325	LINK BY LINK com- menced in ... 340
A BRAVE GIRL (A SHORT STORY) ... 332	HIS BITTER FOX OR, A STRUGGLE FOR A HEART, commenced in ... 344
ACTIVITIES ... 334	TRUE TILL DEATH; OR, A FAILURE OF JUSTICE, commenced in ... 350
STATISTICS ... 335	
HOUSEHOLD TIPS ... 335	
SENSES ... 335	

NOTICES TO CORRESPONDENTS.

OUR CORRESPONDENTS should in all cases furnish us with their names and addresses. Letters signed simply with initials or a nom de plume may not always receive immediate attention, as our space is limited. No charge is made under any circumstances for advertisements appearing on this page.

A. C.—Vaseline is a preparation of petroleum. W. E.—1. To clean silver, use finely powdered whiting moistened with a little sweet oil. Let the mixture dry on, then rub it off with a soft linen cloth, and polish with chamois leather. 2. Tins are cleaned with a mixture of rotten stone, soft soap, and oil of turpentine, mixed to consistency of stiff putty. Mix it with a little water, and rub over the metal; then rub off briskly with chamois leather.

R. L.—Camomile flowers will help to rid a person of fleas. Carry a few of the flowers in your various pockets for a few days.

A. B.—Bunions may be removed by painting them with iodine. A solution of sulphur and water will remove dandruff. Rusty nail water will remove freckles.

H. N.—Laughter is an admirable stimulative to healthy digestion. It was on this ground kings and nobles, in olden times, employed jesters to excite their risible muscles at and after dinner.

R. G.—Latin was formerly the language of the Roman republic and empire, and was spoken over the entire Italian peninsula. It ceased to be a living tongue about the eighth century of our era, but continued in use as the language of the church, of law, and of learning generally until within the last two centuries. Good Latin scholars can readily carry on a conversation in that language. As a considerable portion of the service in the Roman Catholic church is in Latin, it is necessary that the priests should be good Latin scholars.

J. G.—The breath may be improved by chewing a little charcoal occasionally.

A. R.—Offensive perspiration may be mitigated by putting a little spirit of ammonia in the water when you wash in the morning.

D. H.—To cure drunkenness the following recipe has been found efficacious in a great many cases: Sulphate of iron, five grains; peppermint water, eleven drams; spirits of nutmeg, one dram. This preparation acts as a tonic and stimulant, and so partially supplies the place of the accustomed liquor, and prevents the absolute physical and moral prostration that often follows a sudden breaking off from the use of stimulating drinks. It is to be taken in quantities equal to an ordinary dram, and as often as the desire for a dram returns.

M. D.—To bleach sponge, soak it in diluted muriatic acid ten or twelve hours; then wash it with water and immerse it in a solution of hyposulphate of soda to which a small quantity of diluted muriatic acid has been added. Wash and dry it.

A. H. H.—Phosphorus was discovered in 1669 by Brandt, an alchemist of Hamburg, who obtained it by a process which remained a secret until 1737. In 1769 the Swedish chemist, Gahn, discovered it in bones, and revealed the process of extracting it. It is a soft, semi-transparent solid, slightly heavier than water, and not unlike wax in appearance. It is never found in nature in a pure state, but, combined with oxygen, it forms one of the principal constituents of the bones of animals, and one of the ingredients of a fertile soil. It is easily melted, and is exceedingly inflammable. When exposed to the air it emits a whitish smoke, which is luminous in the dark, and smells like garlic. At a temperature far below that of boiling water it takes fire, and burns with a large, brilliant flame, producing a cloud of white smoke. A blow, a hard rub, or even the heat of the hand, is sufficient to kindle it, when it runs about in a melted and blazing state, causing burns which are very difficult to heal. It should never be handled except under water. Those who work in phosphorus, as the manufacturers of lucifer matches, are liable to necrosis, or mortification, of the jaw bones, the result of inflammation of the membrane investing the bones. The affection is thought to be produced by the inhalation of air contaminated with phosphorus vapour, which has a local action on the teeth, gums and jaws, and a general deteriorating effect on the blood.

PIVOTING BAR, COMPRESSOR BAR, CLIP PLATE, and ROCKING LEVER, four seamen in the Royal Navy, would like to correspond with four young ladies with a view to matrimony. Pivoting Bar is tall, golden hair, blue eyes, fond of music and dancing. Compressor Bar is medium height, brown hair and eyes, fond of home. Clip Plate is eighteen, tall, dark eyes, good-looking, fond of music and dancing. Rocking Lever is nineteen, medium height, fond of home and children.

DARKEST NELLIE, eighteen, medium height, dark hair and eyes, good-looking, would like to correspond with a tall, fair seaman in the Royal Navy about twenty.

H. D., a widower, thirty, fond of home, would like to correspond with a young lady with a view to matrimony.

PEGGIE and TOPSY, two friends, would like to correspond with two young gentlemen with a view to matrimony. Peggie is twenty-one, medium height, brown hair, blue eyes. Topsy is seventeen, dark hair, grey eyes. Respondents must be between twenty and twenty-six, tall.

DASHING BILL and LIVELY DICK, two friends, would like to correspond with two young ladies. Dashing Bill is twenty, fair, dark eyes, fond of home. Lively Dick is eighteen, blue eyes, of a loving disposition.

WHY SHE MARRIED HIM.

"I'll never wed! Not I, indeed!"
The maiden said to one who chided.
"If any suitor comes to plead
He'll have my answer most decided.
For I prefer a single life,
With freedom for my inclinations,
To all the honours of a wife
And necessary perturbations."

"But if the prince should come this way,
For whom, no doubt, your heart is waiting,
You would not surely whisper nay,
Your rightful throne thus abdicating?"
"Ah, yes, I would!" the maid replied,
So very wise, so wondrous clever.
"For I'm determined to abide
In single blessedness for ever."

"Well, well; we'll see," with curious smile,
The other said, a trifle nettled.
"Just wait, my dear, a little while
Ere you declare your future settled.
For none can tell what may arise
To make us alter our opinion;
And Love will take you by surprise
When he makes ready your dominion."

The maiden slowly shook her head,
And Mentor's solemn speech decided.
"I do not fear defeat," she said,
"With coast of mail I am provided.
And should Love whisper in my ear
His studied speech with bold persistence,
I shall pretend I do not hear,
Or bid him please to keep his distance."

'Twas thus she spoke before Love came;
And though she vowed to interdict him,
I must confess it, to her shame,
She fell a very easy victim.
For when, to please his suit, the Prince
Appeared, most graciously she met him;
And married him—she told me since—
For fear some other girl might get him.

"This is the maid," the Mentor said,
"Who was so very wise and clever,
She oft declared she would not wed,
But lead a single life for ever."
Ah! then, indeed, she did not know
How resolutions would be shaken;
And her experience goes to show
How easy 'tis to be MIS-TAKEN.

DARLING LOU and SAUCY SUE, two friends, would like to correspond with two seamen in the Royal Navy. Darling Lou is tall, of a loving disposition. Saucy Sue is tall, fond of dancing. Respondents must be between twenty and twenty-four, tall, dark.

E. J. L., twenty-one, tall, dark, good-looking, would like to correspond with a young lady between eighteen and twenty, tall, good-looking.

VIOLET, ROSE and LILY, three friends, would like to correspond with three young gentlemen. Violet is eighteen, fair, brown hair, blue eyes, fond of home and music. Rose is seventeen, fair, golden hair, brown eyes. Lily is seventeen, dark hair, blue eyes. Respondents must be between eighteen and twenty.

LYDIA, EMILY and LIZZIE, three friends, would like to correspond with three young gentlemen with a view to matrimony. Lydia is twenty-two, medium height, dark hair and eyes, fond of home and music. Emily is twenty, tall, dark hair and eyes, good-looking, fond of home. Lizzie is eighteen, medium height, brown hair, grey eyes, of a loving disposition.

CLARISSA, MABEL and GERTIE, three friends, would like to correspond with three young gentlemen with a view to matrimony. Clarissa is twenty-two, tall, dark. Mabel is twenty, medium height, dark. Gertie is eighteen, medium height, dark hair and eyes, good-looking. Respondents must be from twenty-two to thirty, tall, dark.

ROMANTIC BILL, twenty, medium height, fair, brown hair, would like to correspond with a young lady with a view to matrimony. Respondents must be between eighteen and twenty, good-looking.

LOUIS, eighteen, dark, dark eyes, good-looking, of a loving disposition, fond of home and children, would

like to correspond with a young lady about the same age.

VORTEX, twenty-four, good-looking, would like to correspond with a young lady.

LIZZIE and ANNIE, two friends, would like to correspond with two young men in the Royal Navy about twenty. Lizzie is nineteen, tall, dark, good-looking, fond of music and dancing. Annie is eighteen, medium height, fair, good-looking.

GEORGE H., twenty, tall, fair, good-looking, would like to correspond with a young lady with a view to matrimony. Respondent must be from seventeen to twenty, good-looking.

HARRY and JAMES, two friends, would like to correspond with two young gentlemen with a view to matrimony. Harry is twenty-five, medium height, dark, brown hair and eyes, of a loving disposition, fond of home and children. James is twenty-six, medium height, fair, auburn hair, blue eyes, of a loving disposition, fond of home and children. Respondents must be between twenty-one and twenty-three, dark and fair, fond of home and children.

MARY and ANNIE, two friends, would like to correspond with two young gentlemen with a view to matrimony. Mary is twenty-five, medium height, dark, dark hair and eyes, of a loving disposition, fond of home and music. Annie is twenty-five, medium height, dark, brown hair, hazel eyes, of a loving disposition, fond of home and music. Respondents must be between twenty-five and thirty, medium height, fair, fond of home and music.

G. G. and H. H., two friends, would like to correspond with two young ladies. G. G. is twenty-two, medium height, dark, brown hair, hazel eyes, fond of home and music. H. H. is twenty-three, tall, fair, good-looking.

COMMUNICATIONS RECEIVED.

TRY is responded to by—Harold, twenty, tall, dark. TOSY by—George, twenty-three, tall, fair.

ALMA by—Musician, twenty-two, fair, fond of home and children.

HARRY by—Ivy, eighteen, medium height, brown hair and eyes.

JAMES by—His Guardian Angel, medium height, dark hair and eyes, of a loving disposition, fond of children.

ETHEL by—Joe Goss, fair, fond of singing.

JENNY by—Fire Bucket, twenty-one, dark, good-looking.

HEROIC ANNIE by—Hydra, dark, good-looking.

FRED H. by—Di, dark, dark eyes.

WALTER by—Lady Gus.

STEPHEN by—Lady Lil.

LADY IROQUOISE FAYNE by—J. B., eighteen, tall, good-looking.

ROBERT by—Little Gipsy, eighteen, medium height, good-looking, fond of home.

HAPPY WILL by—Eva.

CONTENTED JOE by—Marian.

HEROIC ANNIE by—Compressor Plate.

LADY IROQUOISE FAYNE by—Bertie, twenty, medium height, blue eyes, fond of dancing.

LIVELY TOM by—Sarah, twenty-one, tall, dark, brown hair, hazel eyes, of a loving disposition.

DASHING JACK by—Marie, twenty-one, tall, fair, golden hair, hazel eyes.

HONESTY by—Eva Mary G., eighteen, medium height, brown hair, grey eyes.

A. B. by—J. A., tall, dark.

ONE ALONE by—Desolate, medium height, fair, fond of dancing.

ALMA by—Louis D., tall, fair, blue eyes, good-looking.

ALL the back Numbers, Parts, and Volumes of the LONDON READER are in print, and may be had at the Office, 334, Strand; or will be sent to any part of the United Kingdom post free for Three Halfpence, Eightpence, and Five Shillings and Eightpence each.

THE LONDON READER, post free, Three Halfpence Weekly; or Quarterly One Shilling and Eightpence.

LIFE AND FASHION, Vols. I. and II., Price Seven Shillings and Sixpence each.

EVERYBODY'S JOURNAL, Parts I. to IV., Price Three pence each.

Now Ready, Vol. XXXVI. of the LONDON READER, Price Four Shillings and Sixpence.

Also the TITLE and INDEX to Vol. XXXVI., Price One Penny.

NOTICE.—Part 225 (July) Now Ready, Price Six pence; post free, Eightpence.

N.B.—Correspondents must address their Letters to the Editor of the LONDON READER, 334, Strand, W.C.

††† We cannot undertake to return Rejected Manuscripts. As they are sent to us voluntarily authors should retain copies.

London: Published for the Proprietors at 334, Strand, W.C.

A. SMITH & Co.